

**MANIPULATING METAPHORS: AN ANALYSIS
OF BEADWORK CRAFT AS A CONTEMPORARY
MEDIUM FOR COMMUNICATING ON AIDS AND
CULTURE IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

BY

KATE WELLS

November 2006

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**SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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IN THE FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, DURBAN**

**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR SUZANNE LECLERC-MADLALA
NOVEMBER 2006**

DECLARATION

I, Kate Wells, declare that **Manipulating Metaphors: An Analysis of Beadwork Craft as a Contemporary Medium for Communicating on AIDS and Culture in KwaZulu-Natal** has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently presented in candidature in any other university. The thesis is the result of my own personal investigation and practice, both in conception and execution except where otherwise stated in the text. Other sources are acknowledged in the bibliography.

Signature: *K. Wells*

Date: *30 MARCH 2007*

Supervisor Signature: *J. D. M. M. M.*

Date: *30 March 2007*

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DEDICATION

**THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT TO
ALL THE RURAL TRADITIONAL CRAFTSWOMEN OF
KWAZULU-NATAL WITH WHOM I HAVE WORKED SINCE 1996**

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of a creative design HIV/AIDS communication programme named *Siyazama* (we are trying) that works in association with rural traditional beaded cloth doll makers from KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. As a reflective thesis it represents a hermeneutic opportunity to ascertain the extent to which an interdisciplinary programme of HIV/AIDS education and training impacted on the lives of the women involved and how their expert skills of craftswomen were employed to understand and address the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic.

What began in 1996 on invitation from the African Art Centre in Durban as a simple intervention to upgrade craft techniques and craft construction developed of its own accord into a unique HIV/AIDS intervention in 1999. The communication mode in which the rural women were skilled - beadwork - was long used by women in KwaZulu-Natal as a mode of communication to circumvent the Zulu cultural taboo on discussion of matters of emotional and sexual intimacy called *hlonipha*. In the modern era of HIV/AIDS, this same mode has been revived and reworked as a means for affecting communication about the many sensitive and taboo issues that surround this disease.

There is much scientific evidence which points to the fact that women in this part of the world are far more susceptible than men to HIV infection, largely due to their lower social status, their economic dependence on men and their need to manage the large-scale poverty that affects them and their families. All of this contributes to increasing their vulnerability to AIDS. Ethnographic analysis of the experience of HIV/AIDS amongst Zulu-speaking craftswomen in KwaZulu-Natal has also revealed the nature of the complex cultural belief system that is alive and articulated in the local art and AIDS interface.

This thesis describes the myriad ways in which a particular group of rural women of KwaZulu-Natal, owing to certain customary prescriptions, appear as largely silenced on sexual and sensitive relationship issues. Yet, their expert

abilities in beadwork have afforded these women the opportunity to express innermost concerns about the epidemic in three dimensional forms. The historical record of KwaZulu-Natal shows us how beadwork was often used traditionally by women to take the place of speaking. The *Siyazama* Project beadwork exhibit, comprising over 300 pieces of individual beaded artifacts and collected between 1999 and 2005, provides verification of the continued existence of this form of expression. It is an archive of the fields of inquiry which were covered in the *Siyazama* educational programme starting with 'breaking the silence on AIDS' in 1999 and ending with anti-retroviral therapies (ART) in 2005. The relationship between the beaded crafts and the AIDS educational information which was received during the course of the *Siyazama* AIDS educational programme is explained through an analysis of this beaded collection.

As an indepth qualitative study of the experiences and impact of the HIV/AIDS intervention with women beadworkers from rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal, this thesis represents an attempt to account for how a creative design HIV/AIDS communication programme has impacted on the lives of the women reached by the programme, and how their skills as craftswomen have been utilized to make sense of the local HIV/AIDS epidemic whilst raising awareness about AIDS in their communities. The overall aim of the study is to interpret the effect and effectiveness of beadwork craft as a visual metaphoric mode of expression, and to define the way the project sought to circumvent particular cultural taboos on the discussion of sexuality and other matters of personal intimacy.

The study describes some of the common beliefs and attitudes that persisted at the time at which the project commenced and demonstrates how these have been 're-written and re-corded' in beadwork throughout the six-year duration of the intervention. My focus throughout is on assessing the value of this project through proposing the medium of beadwork as a contemporary and unique cultural archive that speaks to the complexities of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa.

Whilst the project to date has largely proven that design innovation and visual communication can contribute to the social and economic development of rural craftspeople, this thesis shall argue that traditional craftswomen, through their craft making, can also play a significant role in communicating critical social and public health messages into hard-to-reach rural areas.

Through this PhD thesis I hope to shed some light on how traditional beadwork activity in KwaZulu-Natal has changed through time while persisting up until today, and how it has helped women not only economically but in other ways that contribute to the overall health and well-being of themselves and their communities.

I suggest a model for work with similar rural traditional craftspeople that could positively affect the direction of future craft developments in KwaZulu-Natal. Further I propose that the knowledge and insight gained from this study can be applied well beyond South Africa to other parts of Africa and to the Far East, where there are similar traditional craft-rich communities which are either currently, or will be eventually, confronted by the exigency of HIV/AIDS.

PREFACE

South Africa, the most developed and industrialized country in Africa, is facing the wrath of AIDS. In 2002 a figure of 21.5% of the adult population was recorded as being infected with HIV (Barnett and Whiteside 2002:11). In 2005 the South African Department of Health Study¹ released a figure of 30.2%, amounting to slightly under one third of the total population. From an economic viewpoint this infection rate does not bode well for South Africa, as apart from the inevitable human tragedy, researchers are predicting a productivity slump of 50%. Putting it bluntly, there is little doubt that "AIDS will define the future structure and shape of society, and the business environment in Africa." (Whiteside and Sunter 2000)

Of grave concern, Barnett and Whiteside (2002:274) claims that the devastating consequences of AIDS have not been fully considered by anyone, and that developmental organizations, such as the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) need to rethink their bold goals in their global attempts to eradicate, or at best to diminish, poverty. Existing development indicators do very little to reflect the impact of AIDS nor can they ascertain how to measure its complex consequences on humanity. Little if any progress is expected to be made in the international development goals once the ramifications of HIV/AIDS are taken into account. It will be hard to achieve the major goal of reducing the world's extremely poor population as AIDS will, according to Barnett and Whiteside (2002:193), increase the burden on the poor, and most especially at the household level. Pressure will mount on health care systems, and the provision of additional human and financial resources will be demanded and required. Girl children will be unduly burdened by having to provide extra care, at the expense of neglecting their education, thereby adding further difficulties to the goal of eliminating gender inequality. For millions of poor women in Africa and worldwide, active as care-givers, the future does not hold much promise.

In reality it seems easier to deny the existence of AIDS. Barnett and Whiteside (2002:5) concur that as this virus is invisible and disguised for so long and is slow to emerge with any signs of illness, it is almost reasonable to expect that there is so much misunderstanding surrounding it. This misunderstanding includes our own South African Government's outlook on AIDS. The scenario within which the rural craftswomen live, as discussed in this study, is one in which their Government has been of little help because it perpetuates the mystery with confusing and inconsistent signals about HIV and its links to AIDS (Leclerc-Madlala 2004). After much debate the long awaited anti-retroviral therapy (ART) treatment is available but only to a minority; firstly to those who can afford it, and secondly to those who live in close proximity to a hospital or clinic which dispenses the treatment. For the rest of the tens of thousands of AIDS sufferers in rural South Africa and those who need the treatment urgently, they have been left marginalised and forsaken (Cameron 2005).

Yet there is much good developmental work being carried out within the AIDS ambit in South Africa, and it is heartening to see just how much caring this epidemic has brought to the fore. The word *ubuntu* comes to mind as it is this African word which describes that we are only people because of other people. As De Cock, Mbori-Ngacha and Marum (cited in Nattrass 2004:23) have rightly pointed out "interventions, therefore, should be quantitatively and qualitatively commensurate with the magnitude of the threat posed by the disease." In other words all interventions should be humane and caring, and embedded with human rights as AIDS is a wholly human centered problem. Whiteside and Sunter (2000:61) propose that in such an environment and climate, any AIDS intervention programme therefore must address more than the immediate health disaster and transform the related socio-cultural context, values and expectations. This is indeed the direction which the *Siyazama* Project, the focus of this study, has attempted to follow.

Further to this and important for this thesis, the female traditional beaded cloth doll producers and expert beadworkers in the project are all artists and it has been this creative activity which has allowed the opportunity of a glimpse into

their worldviews. The “crossing borders” phrase coined by editors Schneider and Wright (2006:2) which links art and anthropology can be seen as a new direction in interdisciplinary work involving the two disciplines. Whilst the connections between these two have undoubtedly become more relevant over time, and also more problematic in some sense, this “ethnographic turn” (ibid) has involved a wholly new definition of ethnography particularly in the way its work is classified and adopted. The visual arts, in general, have the potential for bringing in new ethnographic material for contemporary anthropology. The beaded cloth dolls of the *Siyazama* producers represent such creative material. The dolls and their beadwork can be viewed as the text. As works of an anthropological study the *Siyazama* Project dolls and tableaux are the result of numerous and varied fieldwork expeditions and reflexive interactions, and convey a rich and sensual account of Zulu life.

An additional aim of this thesis is to fill a gap in the local historical anthropological record. Scant information exists on female beadworkers themselves, yet the role they perform has been and continues to be historically and traditionally important, and in my opinion, requires urgent documentation. The craft produced is currently being sought after by a number of universities and ethnographic museums worldwide as there is increasing recognition that the work offers a special anthropological iconographic insight into the worldviews of a small group of traditional African craftswomen. These craftswomen are dealing with, and making sense of the AIDS epidemic which is sweeping through their rural communities and villages with devastating consequences. International exposure has made the beadwork craft available to a far larger audience than ever before. This exposure has, in turn, provided the necessary advocacy for the project as well as provoked scholarly interest in gender dynamics through the study of cultural constraints that continue to make women in this part of the world so vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Finally, and from a personal point of view, I feel blessed to have been allowed a unique opportunity to be granted not only an amazing friendship with a very gifted group of ordinary women, but also to have played a role in their lives

over the past ten years. Research for this thesis was originally driven by a great curiosity about the group of craftswomen, their history, their rural lifestyles and their expert beadwork craftsmanship. Throughout the research process I have tried to understand their ways of viewing and experiencing the world whilst also trying to make sense of the spiritual motivations that were strongly evident as a major force in their creative endeavours. I have continually striven, often at my own expense, to provide them with important resources such as knowledge and information on health and AIDS, as well as supplying the beautiful Czech Republic glass beads, which they profess to treasure like currency, to help them express their inner creativity. It has been through this exchange that many old and new ideas on Zulu thoughts and beliefs have been raised, discussed and reflected upon. I have been deeply impressed by the women's broad traditional knowledge, intelligence, profound mathematical logic, intuitiveness and deep respect for their belief systems all of which has provided my motivation to capture the information that forms the basis of this thesis.

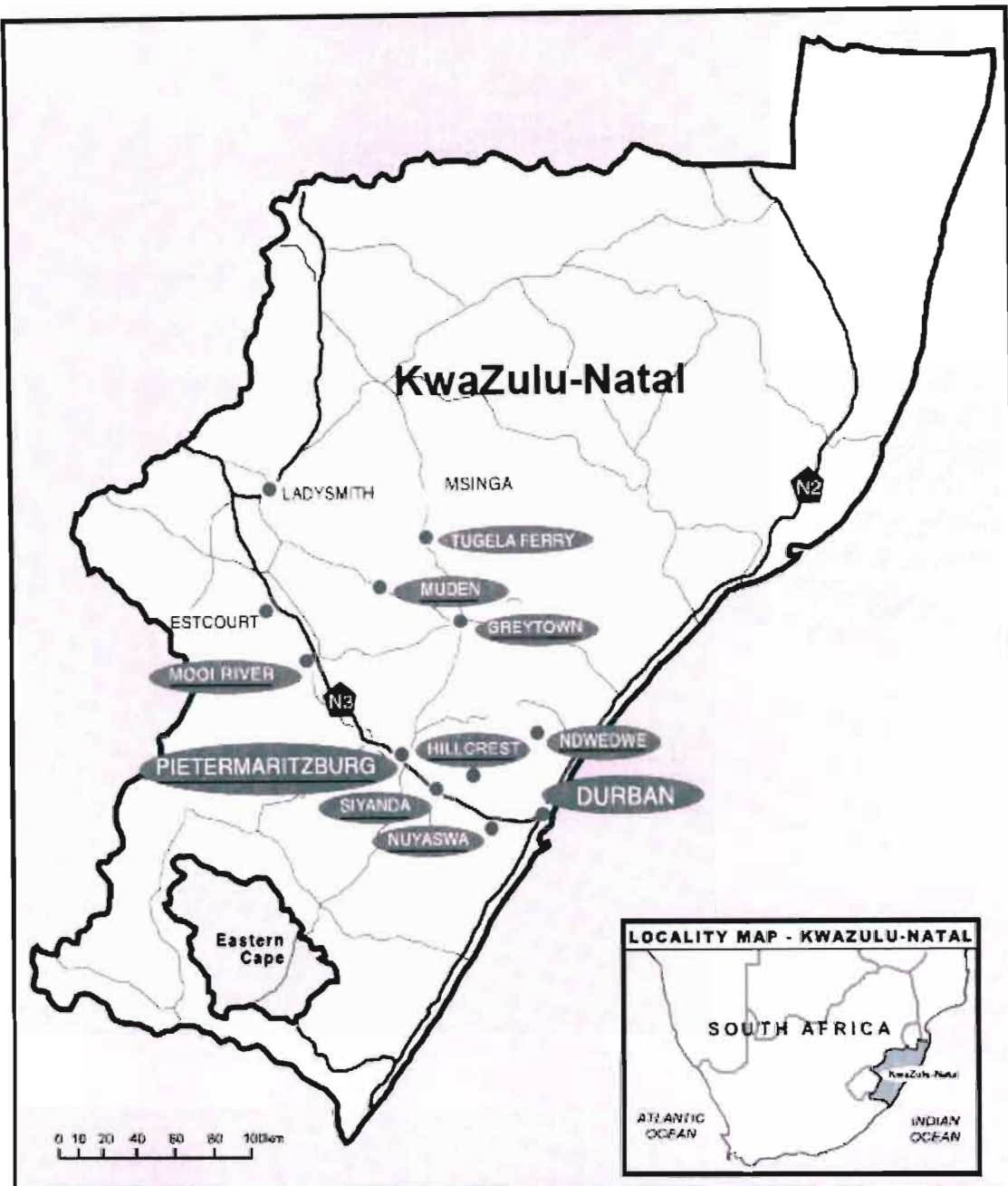
Ultimately this thesis represents a humble contribution to the existing archive on the lives, works and talents of the Zulu women beadworkers, and it is my hope that it assists in some small way towards the recognition that these women, in the forefront of the local struggle against HIV/AIDS, so rightfully deserve.

In conclusion of this section I would like to quote Coetzee. "No one can deny that there are monumental problems in Africa, but to approach these problems from the perspective that the situation is hopeless without an outside infusion of capital and values is to perpetually marginalize African concerns. To counter this, and to challenge the inequity between 'developers' and their 'subjects', there is a need to involve ordinary people in planning and policy processes, and to make their cultures, wisdoms, interests, and knowledge the basis for planning and theorizing." (2001:2)

PREFACE NOTES

1. The South African Department of Health Study 2005 (<http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm> accessed 10th September 2006) showed percentages of estimated HIV prevalence rates among antenatal clinic attendees in KwaZulu-Natal as being the highest in South Africa. The rate is pinned at 39.1%, slightly down from the 2004 percentage which was pinned at 40.7%. The overall national prevalence HIV infection rate for South Africa is 30.2%. The article was written by Rob Noble.

MAP OF KWAZULU-NATAL



● MUDEN ● GREYTOWN ● MOOI RIVER ● NDWEDWE ● PIETERMARITZBURG ● HILLCREST ● SIYANDA ● NUYASWA

Figure 1: Map showing rural locations of the *Siyazama* Craftswomen

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

The main terms used in the conceptualization of this study have been identified and defined as follows:

SIYAZAMA

Siyazama is a Zulu word which directly translated into English means 'we are trying'. The word *izameni* (I am trying) first appeared beaded into a piece of traditional jewellery following a series of creative beadwork workshops held in 1999. When I questioned beadworker Celani Mnchunu of its meaning she replied that it was meant to describe how she was feeling about the topic of AIDS. It was then that the group jointly responded that the word *Siyazama* (we are trying) aptly described their reaction to coping with AIDS and that this word would be their first choice for the name of the project. For this reason the programme became known as the *Siyazama* Project from this point onwards.

TRADITIONAL BEADED CLOTH DOLL MAKING

Jolles (1994:54) explains this expert ability as; "Predominantly a female activity, the first datable trade dolls in KwaZulu-Natal were made in the 1930s and sold by the rural women going from house to house in the white areas of Durban. They were modifications of a type used in Zulu courtship customs." Since 1983, following the first exhibition of the dolls at the African Art Centre at the African Art Centre in Durban, these dolls (referred to as bead cloth sculptures) have incorporated a progressive refinement of some of the indicators of social function by documenting dress styles, hair styles, beadwork accessorizing, ritual, kinship, hopes, visions and dreams. Since 1999, in the *Siyazama* Project, the sensitive side of human relationships, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on people's lives have been reflected on and inscribed into the beadwork craft. Amongst other things these collectively signify age, marital status, *hlonipha* (avoidances and taboos in Zulu culture) and the social context of particular situations in which taboos of speech and behaviour apply.

HLONIPHA

Raum (1973:1) in the preface of his text *The Social Functions of the Avoidances and Taboos Among the Zulu* places emphasises that the study of avoidances and taboos among the Zulu cannot ever be “merely of academic interest. These sociological phenomena are of eminent practical importance. *Hlonipha*, as they are called, are an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is raised.” This word, which describes respectful restraints inherent in some Zulu traditional cultural practice in KwaZulu-Natal today, is applied and explained repeatedly throughout this thesis.

BEADWORK AS COMMUNICATION

It is widely reported by researchers and anthropologists that Zulu beadwork is a signifier of self-expression, social identity and geographical location. Further to this, it is acknowledged that it has been known as a spiritual vehicle for communication with the ancestors as well as a conveyor of symbolic messages which function in place of language. By the mid-19th century researchers noted that it became primarily a convention for communication between courting youth. Messages were coded by sequencing colours and bead types with agreed local connotations. (Mayr 1906; Crabtree and Stallebrass 2002:48; Van Wyk 2003; Preston-Whyte 1988:62, 1994; Schoeman S. 1983,1996; Jolles 1994:60; Schoeman H, 1975; Grossert 1978; Mthethwa 1988; Magwaza 1999; Brottem and Lang 1973; Twala R. 1954; Levinson R. 1965).

SANGOMA

The *sangoma* in Zulu culture can also be known as a type of doctor or diviner. Often female, they have the power to connect and link with the ancestors, interpret spirit messages and make these known to the living. They also have the ability to understand both the spirit world and the supernatural beyond the conception of ordinary people. Krige (1936:297) explains that the “doctor is, however, more than a link between the spirits and their descendents: he is the protector of society. He it is who can smell out the evil men who have aquired power to work evil on their neighbours and bring disaster on the community.”

Generally when disease breaks out, when cattle are missing or dying, when evil is suspected or when someone is suspected of causing things to go wrong, the *sangoma* is consulted. The *sangoma* will, with the guidance of the ancestors, prescribe a procedure to rectify the situation which often may involve the throwing of bones and the taking of herbal remedies.

HIV/AIDS

HIV is the acronym for the human immunodeficiency virus and AIDS is the acronym for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is, by definition, the end stage disease manifestations of an infection with a virus called HIV. (Schoub 1994:19) However, throughout this text I shall use the term AIDS to refer to the epidemic more broadly.



Figure 2: *Siyazama* Project craftswomen

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

"AIDS is a disease. It is an infection, a syndrome, an illness, a disorder, a condition threatening human life. It is an epidemic – a social crisis, an economic catastrophe, a political challenge, a human disaster. AIDS is known. It has been analyzed assessed assayed tested measured surveyed considered reflected documented depicted exhaustively described. Its virus is primal particular sub-cellular mutant enveloped nitrogenous. Our knowledge of it is clear and precise. But the disease is also unknown. It is guessed estimated projected approximated sketched debated disputed controverted hidden obscured. Still, it is mere fact: an event, a circumstance, a happening, a reality as present as the ocean or the moon.

AIDS is metaphor. It is a threat a tragedy a blight a blot a scar a stain a plague a scourge a pestilence a demon killer rampant rampaging murderer. It is made moral. It is condemnation deterrence retribution punishment, a sin a lesson a curse rebuke judgment. It is a disease." Cameron (2005:42)

INTRODUCTION

These poignant words are by Judge Edwin Cameron, an HIV positive advocate and prominent AIDS activist in South Africa. They express the vast scale of the dilemma in attempts to study and make sense of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The words also appropriately account for the scale of emotive responses this disease manifests in people's hearts and minds, especially when applied to poor rural women, as this thesis will demonstrate. Much research has highlighted the vulnerability of rural women in Africa to HIV/AIDS (Nattrass 2004; Karim and Karim 2005; Barnett and Whiteside 2002;

Whiteside and Sunter 2000; Gow and Desmond 2002; Leclerc-Madlala 2005) and the rural female traditional beadworkers from KwaZulu-Natal, who participated in the research for this study, are no exception.

This chapter discusses, in detail, the background and motivation for the launch of the *Siyazama* project in Durban, South Africa in 1999 and the subsequent development of the project within the context of the rural crafts industry in South Africa. My research interest in the project has been consistently aimed at assessing the value of this type of creative interactive work with rural women, the effectiveness of metaphoric expression through beadwork with regard to sensitive issues, and the impact of the new HIV/AIDS education and whether it has resulted in any lifestyle changes by the craftswomen.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In 1996 I began my involvement as a designer, upon invitation, by the African Art Centre in Durban, to improve the quality of the workmanship of the beaded cloth dolls and tableaux of rural craftswomen. The group of rural Zulu craftswomen comprised a small group of traditional doll and tableau makers, amounting to no more than 20 women in total. All were residents from the Muden region, Msinga region, the Ndwedwe region, the Inanda Valley, and the area of Nuyaswa which forms part of the Valley of a Thousand Hills, with distances from Durban ranging between 40km and 200km.

The historical record clearly demonstrates that market forces and global trends have always played a definitive role in shaping and directing the development of rural craft in KwaZulu-Natal (Thorpe 1994). By the mid 1990s a significant problem arose within the beaded cloth doll and beaded constructed tableau genres as they were no longer selling as well as they had been selling previously. Anthea Martin of the African Art Centre, a major rural craft marketing outlet in Durban, cited the reason for this as being a lack

of attention to quality control or 'finish' coupled with minimal or no design innovation taking place (personal communication, July 1996). The products were largely poor in quality, resulting in limited sales that were financially crippling to the craftswomen's already poverty-stricken lifestyles. Well before this, in 1988, renowned and prominent social anthropologist Eleanor Preston-Whyte whose work with the rural craftswomen of KwaZulu-Natal is well documented, commented on the importance of the 'culture broker' in the work with craftswomen and the critical role performed by brokers in terms of marketing the crafts as well as stimulating new forms of art (1988:76). It seemed clear that this was possibly a missing link in the rural women's craft production at that time. When I was invited to work alongside the craftswomen in 1996, my agenda, set by the African Art Centre, was to understand the new aesthetic requirements of tourists and to propose new and necessary changes within the two dimensional and three dimensional beaded cloth sculptures and structures. This was to make them more saleable. The fact that the small group of traditional craftswomen was facing further economic hardship should no solution to their craft quality be found was a most powerful motivating force. My initial research revealed that most lived in very poor circumstances and few, if any, had electricity, piped running water or toilet facilities. Their beadwork skill offered the best way to improve their circumstances.

Between 1996 and 1997 I organized a series of workshops to provide the beadworkers with technical construction skills and quality materials. The response was immediate and gratifying with the quality of their work improving markedly to such an extent that their crafts were soon once more in demand.

The vast majority of rural traditional craftspeople in KwaZulu-Natal are women, the majority of whom have an impressive ability and skill in beadwork acquired matrilineally, from mother to daughter. With the passage of time I became familiar with beadwork details created by individual craftswomen in the project with regard to distinctive design, form, structure and colour of their beadwork. Each producer had displayed her own highly distinctive and recognizable idiosyncratic style. Similarly, observing their nuances of

construction techniques and how they easily strung beads together on a needle, I had never once seen them outwardly adding or counting. Yet their beadwork and three dimensional constructions reflected a high level of knowledge about geometry, mathematics, balance and rhythm.

A major objective and motivator for the initial intervention was to identify crucial strategies that would alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of the rural craftswomen: the all-human side of craft making. Collaborating and creating partnerships with craftswomen, linking rural groups with marketing outlets and craft centres, was an important component of this early work. My initial involvement focused upon the augmenting and enhancement of their crafts and supported the development of new opportunities for income generation.

The sustainability of any rural craft industry is dependent on the quality of its craftwork, the accessibility of market outlets and, most importantly, when targeting a tourist market, the craftwork must demonstrate a high degree of quality. Importantly, it should also include the meaning and value of the art to the community from which it springs. Yet South Africa's economy, now more than ten years into its first democracy, is still particularly vulnerable and interdependent owing to a sophisticated industrial infrastructure balanced against a sprawling and widespread informal and rural sector; the site and origination of traditional craft (Wells, Conolly and Sienaert 2004). Nonetheless rural craft should also be acceptable to a highly discerning international tourist market - notwithstanding being aware of the slow-to-emerge local and national market, and attempts at making new inroads into this arena must always be encouraged. The historical record has shown that whilst good quality crafts in Africa have always led to economic rewards, if there is no innovation and no design development then economic sustainability is often far beyond reach (Guille 2005). Similarly this is also the case with rural crafts in South Africa.

The situation then demands that the craftspeople themselves, as the providers and suppliers to this industry, must be nourished emotionally, socially, spiritually and economically and above all they must be healthy. Based on a still evolving theory and my current research in the field of arts/health, it has become clear that health and well-being can be improved through creative activities: i.e. art as therapy. In the educational workshops of the *Siyazama* Project, the focus has always been to provide a mechanism to promote and cascade information, develop structures and channels for marketing and producing crafts that promote a culture of arts and encourage thinking around pressing health issues.

During these lively and interactive workshops the women discussed the problems that they were encountering in their lives. For example, many spoke at length of the neglected health, social and economic environment in which they live. This 'small talk' was highly significant as much of it revolved around the illness of so many people in the community: HIV/AIDS. Descriptions of their social environment, homesteads, communities and villages, seemed to reflect a high degree of suspicion, uncertainty and fear. It was clear that these craftswomen felt acutely vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and that their unique abilities and cultural heritage were at severe risk.

By the close of the 1990s the local HIV/AIDS epidemic had matured into an epidemic of highly visible physical debility and death (Leclerc-Madlala 2001). Yet there remained a great silence around the topic. In consultation with the groups of craftswomen that I was working with at the time I felt a moral obligation to broach the highly sensitive subject of AIDS. It was decided that, together as women, AIDS education would be welcomed as part of the craft innovation workshops which began in earnest in 1999. Of equal concern was the fact that the small group of women appeared largely ignorant about the basic facts of AIDS. This overwhelming and prevailing ill-preparedness to deal with HIV/AIDS was revealed to me at the very first workshop.

At this stage it was also apparent that the few marketing outlets in Durban and Johannesburg that marketed the beaded crafts profitably, were in no way able, nor interested, in making sure that these traditional craftswomen were AIDS literate or able to manage the AIDS epidemic that was creating havoc in their communities. When I floated the idea of the workshops in AIDS awareness with outlets in Durban I received two very telling responses: "Why? Do not bother – there are thousands of them!" and "What's AIDS got to do with crafts?" I then took it upon myself to seek ways to address the growing life-threatening concern that affected these vulnerable women and to help bridge the communication gaps that existed in their lives. Information gathered on literacy levels revealed that few could read or write in Zulu and the vast majority of the women had no proficiency in English at all. It was clear that the message had to be conveyed in ways other than through literacy to be of any real benefit.

By early 2000 I had completed a Master of Arts through Middlesex University, London, with my thesis titled *Imibiko Yokufa Nokhuphila* 'Messages of Life and Death'. In it I detailed the extent of the design innovation and research undertaken with the craftswomen thus far. Once the research was completed it was clear that a far broader anthropological type of research that focused on the women's efforts to make meaning of the new knowledge gained through AIDS education was in order. There was still much to be studied, documented, analyzed, and understood. What began in 1996 as a simple intervention to upgrade craft techniques had developed by 1999 into an innovative educational AIDS programme tailored to the specific needs of a group of rural illiterate Zulu craftswomen.

Early in the project the subsequent research had exposed important areas for investigation. The results of the initial evaluation (Wells 2000) which took the form of an ethnographic study of the women and their work, revealed the myriad ways in which the rural women who participated in the initial *Siyazama* Project programme were susceptible to becoming HIV infected. Of particular interest was the ways women reported that some of their traditional cultural

practices were rendering them especially vulnerable and keeping them mostly silent on matters of intimacy and sex. Further topics which emerged at this point requiring further exploration included the role of traditional healers *izangoma* (traditional doctors or diviners) in the battle against AIDS, sexual abuse at the hands of healers, the dilemma for twins if one is HIV positive, views on virginity testing, polygamy, rape, AIDS orphans, *ubuthakathi* (witchcraft) and a variety of cultural behavioural prescriptions termed *hlonipha* that seemed particularly relevant to the women's engagement with HIV/AIDS. Most historical and anthropological accounts of the Zulu emphasize the importance of the system of *hlonipha* in daily rural life (Krige 1936; Bryant 1949) and it is Raum (1973) who described *hlonipha* as a social function within Zulu regulated behaviour that directly results in one's inability and impotence to discuss matters of intimacy¹.

The notion of *hlonipha* still applies and affects the lives of countless women in KwaZulu-Natal, especially those who are illiterate and from rural, more traditional areas. The 2000 evaluation study of the *Siyazama* programme revealed that the rural women who had participated in the workshops had substantial knowledge on HIV/AIDS whereas before they had only heard of AIDS through rumours and hearsay. They were generally able and willing to inform others in their communities and homesteads on how to avoid becoming infected, and in particular, they were informing their children who, they claimed, appeared to be listening and taking their advice. The most pressing concern was that the rural women appeared to be unable to protect themselves against infection. If they were in a co-wife situation, as was the case of several in the sample, they had no authority to request for condom use if they suspected infidelity. Married women complained that some husbands and partners were still unconvinced that AIDS exists at all. The initial study concluded with the fact that simply being married meant that one was in a formidable, high risk situation. The rural women are thus in a quandary; the position they currently find themselves in is one of great hardship, handicap and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Having received generous funding from a number of sources, the intervention positioned itself to be as inclusive as possible in its approach to the AIDS challenge, which many recognize as being much more than a health issue (Leclerc-Madlala 2005) and aimed to educate rural craftswomen on AIDS preventative measures while using strategies that were deemed appropriate and non-confrontational. With the lively workshop setting, the intervention included at varying times undergraduate and postgraduate design students, health workers, medical doctors, *isangoma* (traditional healers) and *izinyanga* (herbalists), People Living with AIDS (PLWA), anthropologists, environmental health workers, performers, musicians and marketing outlets all worked together on a number of levels. Collectively the project aimed to alert most, if not all of the human senses, so that as the participants learnt about AIDS, they also gained new knowledge, not only through their eyes and ears as they made sense of the information, but also through their fingers and hands as they constructed their crafts.

By 2001 the project was named the 'Siyazama Project' by the rural craftswomen themselves. *Siyazama* is a Zulu word meaning 'we are trying'. This term, they responded, truly described both their predicament and their position. For the majority of these craftswomen their participation in the *Siyazama* Project workshops provided them with their first opportunity to hear and learn of AIDS with its broad range of complexities. Before the project the women had only heard of HIV/AIDS through casual gossip and rumour which was, as they claimed, "all they knew of."

During the discussions and presentations in the forums the women would always listen intently, initially silently. While they were working on their new craft constructions in their rural homes, it was anticipated that questions that arose in the workshops would provoke dialogue between partners, co-wives, peers children and neighbours. The craftswomen reported that, at least partially, this was indeed the case and that "our children are listening to us."

After the workshops the women stated that "they wanted to return home and dream of their craft design images." The intrinsically important role of dreams

in Zulu culture is discussed by Berglund (1989:97) who tells us that without dreams true and uninterrupted living is not possible. According to Berglund there is cause for alarm with people who do not dream, as this is the channel of communication between the *amadlosi* (survivor) and the person. "They come to us at night, very clearly. They reveal themselves. We see them very closely and hear them saying things to us. They are just beside us when they reveal themselves in this way" (1989:98). Daydreaming or dreams seen in the daytime are said to be mostly ignored.

According to Lobolile Ximba, expert beadworker from Muden in KwaZulu-Natal, traditionally the expertise and skill of the craftsperson endowed them with a degree of status and respect in their communities (personal communication, June 2003). Their highly valued and socially well positioned status as expert craftswomen afforded them the opportunity to communicate the AIDS information back into their rural homes. They not only benefited personally but were able to use the information acquired, embedded within their crafts, to influence others within their rural homes and local communities.

What this process illuminated was a detailed system of visual communication within the boundaries of the scribally illiterate audience, and it became a vehicle for those that could 'read', decode and decipher the beaded messages. It soon became apparent to me that efforts aimed at communicating around the sensitive issues of sexuality and AIDS through beadwork craft could potentially have a positive affect as an educational strategy.

According to Berglund (1989:78) the importance of the ancestor's *amadlozi* in Zulu life and thinking cannot be overestimated. This belief translates into a continual and very close relationship with the *amadlozi* as there is little that separates the living from the dead and both are equally active. As the majority of the rural craftswomen in this study adhered to a belief system that included ancestral honouring, the *Siyazama* Project embraced cultural perspectives and contemporary approaches that supported cultural affirmation, indigenous knowledge, resourceful product design with public health agendas and

practical information on AIDS. The project methodologies were aimed at encouraging an environment of creative exploration in craft design and product development. The project approach encouraged links with indigenous knowledge systems and concepts of Zulu cosmology, whilst at the same time supporting interactive and meaningful responses to the crisis of AIDS through the participants' individual area of expertise. The resultant craft products thus acted as two way communication tools, encapsulating the key messages of AIDS awareness and education, that had relevance not only within the rural homes and rural communities but also in the market place and beyond.

Since its inception in 1999 the *Siyazama* project has attempted to cover the following educational issues related to HIV/AIDS: awareness, misconceptions, taboos and stigma, prevention, nutrition, caring for the sick, grieving and remembering the dead, traditional therapeutics, orphans, opportunistic disease management and first aid for HIV and AIDS. In 2003 a new series of practical interventions regarding anti-retroviral therapies (ARTs) and how to manage compliance in rural communities was introduced. Aiming at a personal level of interaction has always been a key goal of the project. This was partly in reaction to South Africa's large-scale national HIV prevention programme/campaigns for youth that prefer to erect large billboards, called 'outdoor media', with generic and vague messages blazoned on them. Even for literate people there is evidence that these messages are of limited effectiveness. One example is LoveLife launched in September 1999 by a consortium of leading public health organizations in partnership with a coalition of more than 100 community-based organizations, major South African media groups, the South African government and a host of private foundations including the Kaiser Family Foundation. On the website it is claimed that LoveLife combines a highly visible sustained national multi-media HIV education and awareness campaign with countrywide adolescent-friendly service development in government clinics, and a national outreach and support programme for the youth. After seven years in operation and numerous internal evaluation studies, there is much evidence that this major campaign has been of limited effectiveness.

Karim and Karim (2005:283) caution that although “LoveLife's efforts to combine youth centres that offer recreation and other services along with health and prevention needs are important, an evaluation of their success and popularity among the youth has not yet been conducted.” The infection rate among South African teenagers is still far too high and estimates are suggesting that as many as 40% of the current generation of young men will die of AIDS in adulthood, assuming no change in their risk of becoming HIV infected, and for young women the situation is far worse (Karim and Karim 2005:266).

The year before both LoveLife and the *Siyazama* Project were launched, in 1998, Gugu Dlamini, a young African woman, an AIDS campaign worker and a Person Living with AIDS (PLWA), was murdered following her disclosure that she was HIV positive². Following on from this regrettable incident it became clear that a more culturally sensitive approach to AIDS was called for in any AIDS awareness campaign, and most especially when working with rural women. With a supportive and caring environment the craftswomen enthusiastically reacted to their new awareness through the making of their beaded crafts, which in turn gave them the opportunity to air and express their many and varied concerns. The women also revealed how their beadwork and beadwork skills were a mode used traditionally and historically to circumvent the discussion on social taboos on matters of emotional and sexual intimacy. Thus their new understanding of risky behaviour and creative art and AIDS interfaces began to infuse through their beadwork craft as their untold stories were revealed, some profoundly sexually explicit in their rendering.

Within a short space of time, national and international recognition followed with art awards, exhibitions, museum collection commissions and accolades for the women in the project. Significantly the resultant economic benefits provided palpable and immediate reward and played, as they still do, a major role in the success of this intervention.

AIDS AND RURAL WOMEN

In spite of the recognition and economic benefits it is clear that within the current context of HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, rural Zulu craftswomen find themselves in a new and complex predicament. While they are primarily sole breadwinners in their rural homes, and have earned a degree of role-model status through their expert craft-making abilities, thus being regarded as opinion-makers in their communities, they still face all the risk of poorly-educated rural women in Africa. In the context of AIDS this includes being highly susceptible to HIV infection through their female physiology, occupying a lower social status than men, managing poverty, largely lacking English proficiency and scribal writing and possibly being subjected to cultural practices that could increase their vulnerability to the ravages of AIDS due to customary gender inequalities.

AIDS is a disease that touches the very core of humanity and human survival. One of the biggest obstacles in Africa is to overcome the stigma attached to AIDS (Schoub 1994:xiv; Barnett 2002:29) as well as to the topic of sexuality as a field of enquiry. AIDS is predominantly considered to be a disgraceful disease and this has had the effect of shrouding it in mystery and misconception (Leclerc-Madlala 2000). In an illuminating article entitled "Exposing the Mystery of AIDS" (2000:9) she states "The mystery has to do with a stubborn and multi-layered AIDS silence, or what the professionals call 'the denial' that has characterized the AIDS pandemic in many parts of Africa from the very beginning." Moreover, that author believes that the silence has much to do with heterosexual power dynamics and sexual lifestyles rooted in the legacy of polygamy that are contoured by what is often called culture.

Researchers have proven that in Africa, AIDS is largely a heterosexually transmitted disease infecting many more women than men. Women are far more susceptible than men to infection partly due to their physical make up (Barnett and Whiteside 2002:10). Empirical evidence from the Joint Oxfam HIV/AIDS Programme JOHAP 2004 (as cited in Leclerc-Madlala 2005) shows the rate of transmission from male to female to be far higher than from female

to male and in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe young women are three times more likely to be infected than young men of their same age group.

The reality of the situation in South Africa is that between one fifth and one quarter of the population is believed to be HIV infected and worst of all, this silent, hidden and invisible virus overwhelmingly targets women (Barnett and Whiteside 2002:185; Dorrington 2002:28). According to the latest 2006 statistics on the Global Health fact sheet website, there are almost three million women infected with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Most of these women are in normal heterosexual relationships: wives, sisters, mothers and daughters, who, in turn are largely invisible and silenced because of their culture and the accompanying discriminatory gender dynamics. Accordingly rural families are currently in severe social crisis and care has been extended, in many cases, to the elderly and the very young (Barnett and Whiteside 2002:218).

The current welfare system and health care sector in Durban of which I have personal experience, continues to generate a great amount of confusion and misinformation. It appears that few, if any, of these health care facilities or myriad of health care personnel have the capacity to assist people, appearing to be not so 'readily available' as they claim to be. Experience has shown that a good quality motor car is required to get signatures of authority from rural magistrates, off the beaten track police stations, district surgeons and welfare stations. Abundant amounts of cash are required to pay for numerous cell phone calls, coupled with consecutive days off work and much hope and patience in order to obtain good quality health care. The realities of encountering the limitless ineptitudes of badly trained staff, their lack of resources (such as no available motor cars for health workers), and badly resourced facilities are most disconcerting for ordinary South African people. The expectation is that the health sector should be better prepared to cope with the influx of AIDS-affected people from the informal settlements and rural areas without any form of outside assistance. There is very little opportunity for these people to access any form of care, even if it is urgently required.

The context in which the rural craftswomen of KwaZulu-Natal live is one in which their own government has been of little help by perpetuating the 'denialism' about AIDS with confusing and inconsistent signals about HIV and its links to AIDS. According to Nattrass (2004), South Africa is infamous for its obfuscation and prevarication on AIDS policy. She claims that neither a Constitutional Court ruling on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) intervention in 2002 nor the acceptance that anti-retroviral therapy (ART) is beneficial, has helped the South African government to change course. She argues that an implicit moral economy of triage informs the South African government's policy on AIDS. Crothers, Alexander and Uys all claim (as cited in Nattrass 2004) that the contemporary contours of sexual culture are a vitally important dimension of the AIDS pandemic. They believe that a better understanding of culture in the context of rural KwaZulu-Natal can contribute to better knowledge of HIV transmission, the vulnerability of all women and of the challenges faced by interventions designed to change behaviour.

Still, many argue, the first thing that must occur is that the whole nation agrees that there is an actual HIV/AIDS problem. This should then be followed by political will and direct leadership to address it. Understandably, this is no easy task particularly as it means transforming sexual relationships in a context where men are expected to have multiple sexual partnerships, and where young women form sexual liaisons with older men for financial advantage (Nattrass 2004:27). According to Leclerc-Madlala (as cited in Nattrass 2004) sexuality is conceptualized as a resource that can be drawn upon for material or economic benefit. For example, sex can be used to secure a job or to acquire material benefits of various kinds from men. Unfortunately the price for participating in this 'sexual economy' is greater vulnerability to HIV infection. In Durban, today, socializing and relationships are currently considered to be 'highly dangerous', according to one young black male informant, and 'without a HIV test, relationships often go no further than the first meeting' (personal communication March 2004). The worldwide phenomenon of the AIDS epidemic and its particular devastation at the local

level in South Africa, has forced a whole generation of young people to re-examine and re-address their own sexual habits and lifestyles.

An issue that has direct relevance for the lives of the rural craftswomen who participated in this current study is the growing legions of AIDS orphans. The latest projected estimates, according to Karim and Karim (2005:351), are that the number of orphans resulting from AIDS-related deaths in South Africa are predicted to rise to five million by 2014. The women of the *Siyazama* Project have reported to me that they are already facing growing financial burdens with having to provide and care for many more children than they originally planned for. The women feel strongly that the combined effect of having to work harder and for longer hours, as well as having to feed many more in their households, is having a serious affect on their health and stress-levels. They claim that this stress is due to “far too much work (responsibility)” being leveled at them. As wives, mothers and care-givers their woes are mirrored in the claims of the statisticians who say that by 2010 the life expectancy of a South African will drop from 63 to 40 and that ninety-two per cent of the worlds AIDS orphans would be in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Bourne, 2003)

What emerged most clearly in my research of the *Siyazama* Project was that the craftswomen felt strongly that through their method of creating craft they could be informed, and educated, and in turn be empowered to explore, communicate and disseminate information and lifesaving knowledge to others. Mostly scribally illiterate, the women related to this form of communication. As skilled beadworkers with the embedded traditional understanding of the ability of beadwork to ‘speak’ within the oral tradition, these women recognize that they have powerful tools at their finger tips to communicate important potentially life-saving messages to others. Through their crafts they were able to comprehend, articulate and exchange complex and sensitive concepts, thereby constructing knowledge and producing meaning. Their beaded crafts and craft making activities were experienced as powerful communicative and therapeutic tools.

Whilst the *Siyazama* project to date has shown that design innovation and visual communication can contribute to the social and economic development of rural craftspeople, this thesis shall argue that traditional craftswomen, through their craft making, can also play a significant role in communicating critical social and public health messages into hard-to-reach rural areas.

This thesis will illuminate some of the cultural norms which tend to prevail and play a role in hampering these particular rural women. For example, the beadworking women are largely unable to protect themselves from infection owing to certain Zulu cultural prescriptions which tend to render them vulnerable and susceptible, especially if they are a *makoti* (a married woman) for whom *lobola* (brideprice) has been paid. One of the key ways in which Zulu women have negotiated these cultural prescriptions has been through their beaded craft. This thesis is an attempt to 'give voice to the voiceless'; in this case to reveal how women have 'spoken' in three dimensional forms through their crafts, the contents of the *Siyazama* Project Collection, and also how they have spoken through indepth interviews which bear testimony to their lives and worldviews. Historical records have tended to recount factual beadwork activities in quantity but recorded little of the beadworkers themselves, as actors, operating in very poor and dilapidated rural conditions. In showcasing the women themselves, this study hopes to provide important documentary evidence of the lives of these unusual rural craftswomen, who play an important, vital and pivotal role in the affirmation and continuation of Zulu traditional and cultural identification.

Today many beaded craftswomen are far better informed and more economically stable than they have been at any other time in the past. Yet they still find themselves faced with predicaments over which they have very limited control. Knowledge and a small measure of financial empowerment are not sufficient to make the necessary life-saving choices in the face of HIV/AIDS. Their role model status, their values and beliefs, their traditional practices, their expert craft making abilities, and their prestige in the community have not afforded them much personal protection against the

effects of the AIDS epidemic. If the women are sexually active, the research to date has revealed that they may still be powerless in the face of HIV infection. Yet by way of their AIDS messaging through their craft they have challenged and are still challenging cultural prescriptions that uphold women's subordination.

It has been almost six years since the initial AIDS related interventions began with these rural women. The research that I began for my MA has developed into a lifelong study.

ART, HEALTH AND ANTHROPOLOGY

The inherent mode of practice which guides this project links art and health directly. Although original in context it is supported by a growing worldwide body of art and health practitioners who share the belief that the arts do contribute positively to general health and well-being. In the United Kingdom, for example, research undertaken by Smith (2004: 8) at the University of Durham analyzing the interface between health and creative activities has recorded that "the rise of arts/health activities can be understood in the context of an evolving critique of mainstream approaches to health. Some see the arts as a way of humanizing health services; some argue the arts have a role to play in communicating health messages and needs; others suggest a more direct role for arts in health, believing arts can be used as a therapy; some are of the view that social ties are key to good health and that art connects people with each other and the communities to which they relate."

Accordingly, the broad range of significant research, especially studies within the myth and mythmaking field of Zulu cosmology and ethnomedicine, such as that undertaken to date by Professor Leclerc-Madlala of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, has relevance in this particular study. Her work has embraced a holistic ontology of the causation factors and thinking processes behind ill health and disease within the micro, meso and macro levels of the life experience of Zulu-speaking people in KwaZulu-Natal. Such studies are very relevant to this current study. In the *Siyazama* Project craft collection

these thinking-patterns and processes are clearly evident in three dimensional forms and these will be explained further in the thesis.

Mike White (2005) in his paper *Establishing Common Ground in Community-based Arts in Health* notes, in the global context, that the Commission for Africa's 2005 report includes a statement to the effect that the road to achieving well-being should be a communal experience. This view aligns with the United Kingdom's stance in that self-esteem is recognized as a key determinant of motivation to better health. Furthermore, this author believes that if cultural contexts are barriers to health improvement and building social capital, there is all the more reason to pursue cultural engagement with those whose health is at risk.

Antony Gormley (1998), a trained anthropologist and artist/sculptor, is one of the most notable sculptors in the United Kingdom. His enormous "Angel of the North" figure looms powerfully over the population at Gateshead in the middle of England: an area which has experienced much change in the past few decades with the advent of the technological age into the conglomerate industries. This change has translated into high unemployment, particularly amid the male population which, in turn, according to some researchers has impacted negatively. Gormley, as a sculptor, sees his contribution as adding a further dimension to anthropology; through artworks that deal head-on with the view (often felt by artists) that anthropology is purely a text-based discipline. His work has much to offer anthropologists in terms of understanding images and their context, and it is this new approach, which draws on both disciplines, which will be utilized and demonstrated throughout this thesis.

CHAPTER LAYOUT OF THESIS

Chapter One has been an introduction to the thesis. Chapter Two is split into three sub-sections, as these sub-sections explore and interrogate the literature within the multi-faceted context of this study. The chapter begins with a review of the local historical literature on beadwork practice. This data

has been recorded and published by several renowned anthropologists who have used primarily ethnography as their method of data collection in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Following on from this is a discussion on a range of literature which talks of the impact of AIDS on rural women. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including some responses from the women in the *Siyazama* Project themselves, Chapter Two also provides the background into the links between anthropology, art and health, both in KwaZulu-Natal as well as in the United Kingdom.

Chapter Three is concerned primarily with the qualitative, reflexive, hermeneutic and ethnographic methodologies which a study of this nature required. The unique and sometimes contentious work of British anthropologist and author of *Art as Agency*, Alfred Gell, is included in this section as his theories have guided the methodologies and provided the backbone for the work undertaken in this study.

Introduced by a statement by Nelson Mandela in the *Africa Report* 2005 calling for the end to world poverty, Chapter Four discusses the history and current position of the rural crafts industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The province boasts the best quality of crafts and craftspeople on the continent yet the future of the industry appears to be both driven and stifled by AIDS. The chapter concludes with an exploration of and suggestions for the best way ahead for this vulnerable industry.

Chapter Five provides ethnographic details of the traditional women beadworkers; those women who have made the *Siyazama* Project into the success that it is today. It explains where and how they live in rural KwaZulu-Natal. It also updates the historical record on their lifestyles, as well as their ideas and thoughts on HIV/AIDS and the role of *hlonipha*, and discusses the ramifications of this cultural mores in their lives.

Chapter Six is a further component of Chapter Five but it focuses on and discusses primarily the women's role as beadworkers and their world of work. It gives their ideas on design and colour. It attempts to show how their

expertise, skills and never ending motivation have given them the opportunity to make their voices heard in a metaphoric mode. This chapter also details how far-reaching their voices have been cascaded to date, and how they have been heard in some prestigious international settings such as in the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, United Kingdom, Michigan State University Museum, USA, the Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, Sweden and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canada.

Chapter Seven concludes this thesis. It discusses how a form of intentional cultural engagement and exchange led to the craftswomen participants in *Siyazama* reacting to the information on AIDS and circumventing some of the prescribed societal norms which characterized their culture. Moreover, the study has shown how traditional craft making, in a largely illiterate rural society, has been an economically viable vehicle for effective large scale education on culturally sensitive issues.

Appendix 1: This appendix comprises a Craft Genre Checklist. It lists the range of different craft produced under the following headings: genre, creator and workshop.

Appendix 2: This section provides an account of the *Siyazama* Project Collection of three dimensional beaded craft sculptures, tableaux, jewellery and dolls, and records the stories which they have told through their work. As an expression of their thoughts and feelings, this section also provides the archival metadata for seventy individual artifacts which they have produced over the duration of the intervention.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. At the time of writing this thesis (10 April 2006), the former deputy president of South Africa, the deputy president of the ANC, the chairman of the Moral Regeneration Campaign and the head of the National AIDS Council, Jacob Zuma, was being tried for rape. The *Daily News* (Tuesday

April 4 2006) carried headlines which asked 'Why No Condom? On page one journalists Maughan and Gifford report that he was questioned about his lack of condom use, although he was fully aware that the female was HIV positive, by State Advocate Charin de Beer. To the question "Why would a man who could be the future president of this country be prepared to take this risk (of contracting HIV)?" he replied with "I had made a decision at that time and I knew the risk I was facing." Later he added that "he believed the risk was not big." He also claimed to have showered immediately afterwards as he believed that this would help with preventing HIV infection. *The Mercury* (Friday April 7 2006) carried a further front page article by the journalists Maughan, Gifford and SAPA of the cross-examination of Zuma's daughter, Duduzile Zuma. The State Prosecutor Herman Broodryk began his examination of Duduzile in a 'booming' voice with a comment to the effect "that (women's intuition) is a very dark and dangerous area for a man." When asked about the rape allegations against her father she responded with "in Zulu culture, at home, we don't talk about sex" and that therefore she had not questioned nor asked her father about the charge.

2. Following the murder of Gugu Dlamini, the AIDS campaign worker, a government press release was issued through the Department of Health on the 18 December 1998. The Partnership against AIDS, launched by the (then) Deputy President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, in Pretoria, claimed it was "shocked" to hear of the death of Ms Dlamini and "condemns the attack" if it is true that her attackers killed her because she disclosed her status. In this press release the (then) Minister of Health, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, said Gugu Dlamini had given the AIDS condition "a face" when the country's youth were not convinced that AIDS exists at all. She noted "Ms Dlamini was one of the cadres of selfless HIV positive South Africans who despite being rejected and discriminated against, went out of their way to educate South Africans about HIV/AIDS so that the same fate that had befallen them, does not befall others" (accessed on the <http://www.gov.za> website 24 May 2006)

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Artists and anthropologists are practitioners who appropriate from, and represent, others. Although their representational practices have been different, both books and artworks are creative additions to the world; both are complex translations of other realities. There are no direct one-on-one transferrals of reality, and art and anthropology no longer occupy opposing sides of a subjective/objective divide in the same way they were assumed to. The status of their respective representational strategies, when compared with each other, has changed, and differences and similarities between ethnographic authority and artistic authorship have similarly been refigured” Schneider and Wright (2006:26)

INTRODUCTION

The anthropological nature of this literature review required that a broad and holistically embracing survey be undertaken. This chapter is divided into three sections: Historical Review of Beadwork in KwaZulu-Natal, HIV/AIDS and Women in Southern Africa, and finally, Design, Health and Community. The ‘Historical Review’ aims to recount the historical literature record behind the expert traditional beadworkers, their encompassing culture, and how this has impacted on their beadwork craft activities in the province. In the next section ‘HIV/AIDS and Women in Southern Africa’ details of their precarious positions as females, balanced against the augmenting AIDS epidemic in KwaZulu-Natal are provided. This section will also explain the connection with ethnography, and how the anthropological record has been updated through the processes of the project. The final section, ‘Design, Health and Community’ takes into account the growing field of arts and health research and how the visual communication linkage has shown its strength in informing

the community of the *Siyazama* Project. The extent of the research undertaken in Design, Health and Community through the Durban University of Technology's (DUT) Department of Graphic Design will be explained as this has been the site of a growing National Research Foundation (NRF) research niche area. Underpinning this entire review is the role and impact of culture in rural female developmental work, and the chapter concludes with indications which provide relevance for the undertaking of this form of art and anthropological practice.

To gather this data a variety of resources was examined for the purpose of seeking a linkage that would combine the previously unrelated topics at the core of this thesis: traditional beadwork and AIDS. Primary sources, interviews, an indepth ethnographic evaluation study conducted in November 2005, numerous fieldwork expeditions and research data, published books, journals and internet sources were interrogated to attempt to discover a list of related theories which talked of the methodologies that were intuitively played out in the *Siyazama* educational programme.

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BEADWORKING PRACTICE IN KWAZULU-NATAL

When surveying both the historical and contemporary literature on beadwork in KwaZulu-Natal, one is initially struck by the lack of reference to the female beadwork producers themselves but rather by the reference to their range of beadworking skills, methods of production, distribution and the history thereof. It is the focus of this review to elaborate on the traditional beadworkers and beaded cloth doll makers, in particular, of KwaZulu-Natal and the context from which they operated.

Some of the earliest historical images appeared in the mid-19th century period which was fairly well represented by artists depicting groups of people wearing beadwork. This included artists like Charles Bell, F.T. l'Ons, Thomas Baines and George French Angus. Of these, Angus was the best known for his colourful watercolours and sketches which illustrated his one year

residence (1846–1847) in South Africa. His well-known book *The Kaffirs Illustrated* contains many excellent renditions of his works mostly depicting detailed images of Zulu beadwork.

Anne Wanless (1987:35) in her article 'Beadwork – the Pictorial Record' attempts to put a time-line to the first appearance of beadwork worn as adornment, as seen in "the original paintings and prints in the Catalogue of Pictures and Catalogue of Prints, compiled by RF Kennedy and published by the Africana Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa in series between 1966 and 1975." Seeking to build onto a "somewhat neglected part of the historical record " she traces artist's illustrations and prints through the early and late 18th century to find relevance to how much beadwork was being worn in Southern Africa and by whom. All of these very early recorded prints were reproduced in black and white, and thus provide us with little evidence of bead colours and even less of the materials used to make beads. What this does make us aware of is the evolution of beadwork construction as she notes that it was only in the early 19th century that the beadwork (as evidenced in the artists prints and illustrations) became less of the single syntax strand-like formation and became more "heavily beaded" (1987:36) and complex.

Several authors have written in detail about the Zulu beadwork style and practice and further discussion on beadwork style development from linear syntax to beadwork 'fabric' is found in works authored by Robert Papini. In his paper '*Izazi* on the eleusine Mother: uncommon sources for pre-colonial religious history in KwaZulu-Natal' (1999) he tracks how the "rigid sexual division of labour" has been misrepresented by historians and ethnographers, and how they missed out on one of the most significant changes in Zulu religious history and that was the women's ascendancy in divination. Hanretta argues that as women were integrated into the 19th century Zulu state, and the "vagaries of political power struggles between Zulu kings and lineage elites began to play a larger part in their lives, alongside the increased potential for the high-born to acquire power and prestige as alliance guarantors, there was a reaction from commoners to intensified domestic exploitation and state control over their lives." (cited in Papini 1999:2) This

situation meant that the women were largely left at home to see to domestic duties, whilst the men were conscripted into the armies, spending large portions of the year fighting battles. Papini claims that it was this environment which encouraged women to construct beadwork 'fabric' (larger pieces of beadwork) using geometric intersecting designs rather than linear syntax seems highly plausible. Moreover, this author (1999:8) believes that "the 'stepped diamond' style, which is related to and explainable in Balfour's theory of geometric arts originated in the stylization and schematic reduction of natural forms and may be taken as icons of erotic love and reproductive fertility."

Sandra Klopper's account of the production and distribution of beadwork in 19th century Zululand in her PhD dissertation (Klopper 1992) unravels the mystery surrounding the non-availability of beads during the reign of the first Zulu king, Shaka, and the second Zulu king, Dingane. She explains how up until the death of the second king, Dingane, in 1840, beads were only obtainable through the royal household thereby manipulating the terms of trade from the bead traders at Port Natal. Further to this, it appears that Shaka adopted, according to Colenbrander (as cited in Klopper 1992), an "extreme aversion" to any form of commercial trade and forbade it, resulting in no bead trading at all amongst the Zulu during this time. Cory (as cited in Klopper 1992:72) claims that the Zulu kings' control over "the distribution of this trade item was intended to prevent ordinary homesteads rather than high ranking officials from acquiring beads."

Despite this ban on glass bead trading, it appears that the beadwork skill was passed down relatively easily through the female lineage, when the unsuccessful young virgins who had been presented to the king for marriage, and who had learnt beadwork skills whilst resident in the royal courts, were now returned to their original homesteads. It was at this point that their skills were enthusiastically learnt by others. Klopper suggests that once it became easier to acquire beads in Zululand, the inhabitants of ordinary households could have made extraordinary efforts to emulate the fine beadwork techniques and styles associated with the king and the women of the *isigodlo*

(royal household site). This is also co-incidentally around the time that the beadwork styles changed and construction of the bead fabric was preferred to the stranded style. It seems plausible that as more beads became available so rose the levels of enthusiasm amongst the beadwork producers. As this activity was directly attached to identity and status, it stands to reason that it became a most signifying art practice for the female producers.

Citing the lack of substantial and definitive information with regard to the practice of making and wearing beadwork in the early 1800s, Klopper (1992:69) points out that most of the interviews were conducted by men with men, "who were neither its producers, nor its main consumers." In 19th century Zululand it was the women who constructed the beadwork, who made the decisions about colour and design, and who had, in turn, been taught this skill by their mothers, yet there is no literature which directly records any information about them as beadwork producers.

Moore (1988:1) asserts that women were not completely ignored in early traditional anthropological studies but it was rather the way they were represented that was questionable. She speaks of 'male biases' by anthropologists who unwittingly have certain expectations of the role of women and who then bring this assumption into the study. In addition to this, the bias is often heightened when the group or individual being studied often communicates the notion of insubordination of women to the anthropologist.

Despite this, much has been recorded on the notion concerning the complex so-called 'language' of beadwork (Van Wyk 2003; Magwaza 1999; Jolles 1994; Preston-Whyte 1994; Mthethwa 1988; Schoeman S. 1983, 1996; Grossert 1978; Schoeman H, 1975; Brottem and Lang 1973; Levinson R. 1965; Twala R. 1954). Seemingly, most of this literature appears as the result of a paper written in 1906 by a missionary in Zululand named Reverend Franz Mayr. In his notes titled "Language of Colours amongst the Zulus expressed by their Bead-work Ornaments; and some General Notes on their Personal Adornments and Clothing" he recorded his observations and interviews about bead colours. Of special interest was his reference (1906:162) to the fact that

“the natives have given each colour of beads a special name and meaning: and they have invented a kind of language of colour, whereby they can convey their thoughts from one to the other without speaking.” This is a powerful statement, which, I believe, has led in part to the proliferation of literature on this subject matter. Mayr then claims that the Zulu would never pick a bead colour which was not “established by traditional use” and that typically the bead traders would abide by the preferences of the Zulus when presenting their beads for sale.

If, as the literature details, colours played such a significant role in traditional Zulu life the question of why then did the Zulu have to ‘invent’ a language begs asking. Although a general overview of the anthropological literature shows that there is little or no evidence of any real decipherable meaning attached to contemporary beadwork, Magwaza (1999:153), in her quest to find function and meaning in Zulu female dress presents an opposing view with her study of a localized population in Camper-Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal. Her informants, especially the older field sources, and Winters (1988:48), all agree that current bead colours can, in fact, hold a range of secret meanings, and these are often deeply emotional in nature. She holds the view that colours do not operate in isolation of each other and are influenced, in turn, by the juxtaposition of other colours as well as the design inherent in the beadwork.

Researchers using direct observational methodologies like Regina Twala (1954), and Father Mayr (1906), both of whom specifically studied beadwork colours and meanings in the Bergville district of KwaZulu-Natal in 1948 and 1907 respectively did not always concur with each other (Brottem 1973:11). Mayr referred to the lack of significance of the design employed in the beadwork itself and noted that it was the colours which in fact held the meaning. Stating that “the actual pattern does not appear to have any defined significance; it is rather the succession of the colour and the relative amounts of the colours that express the tenor of the message” Mayr (1907:165) found himself at odds with Twala. She refuted this notion claiming that it was almost

certain that “the interpretation of the colours varied with the pattern” and that the main message was actually held in the ‘tab’ or design.

Jolles (1991) in his paper entitled “Interfaces between oral and literate societies: contracts, runes and beadwork” traces the relevance of the rune stones as an ancient phonetic system and describes this aforementioned language as ‘letters’ which could be ascribed to the attributes of both animals and gods. He stresses that the most “important function of runes was in connection with magic and divination, and one method being to cast a bundle of sticks onto the ground and ‘read’ the figures they formed.” (1991:262) Similarly in beadwork he states that it is ‘well known’ that certain items transmit messages by the arrangement of colours and impact and arrangement of the design. Further to this, he claims that beadwork messages can be encoded in a similar fashion to the symbolic rune stones. For example, bead colours could be linked to a counterpart of the same colour in nature and thereby also take on the expressive attributes of this object. Many of the associations, he claims, are both metaphorical and emotional.

Jolles’s research into the meaning and function of beadwork in KwaZulu-Natal is extensive and important. Of prime importance is his study of ‘graphemes’ as they have appeared in beadwork both historically and contemporarily. Graphemes are symbolic almost letter-like forms which are found in pieces of beadwork dating from around their first appearance in the 1920s to the present day (1991:269). In combination with colour, these graphemes became strong symbolic representations of specific meanings and associations. His findings illustrate how the letterform may be upside down or inverted and that this does not detract from the meaning in any way. Similarly, in the *Siyazama* Projects present beadwork collection there are numerous examples of this occurrence, and it is most especially noticed with renditions of the beaded HIV/AIDS red ribbon logo. In the early stages of the project when the AIDS symbol was under scrutiny and it was becoming understood for all its complexities, it remained firmly and concisely geometric in form. Colours were highly regulated: only red and white beads were used with a typical amount of saturation per colour. Most recent work has shown a tendency to stray from

the rigors of the red and white colours only, and in doing so, to produce symbols which are sometimes inverted, and often in colours that bear no linkage at all to the previously prescribed red and white. Yet the concomitant meaning remains the same. In Fokosile Ngema's (beadwork producer in *Siyazama*) words "this symbol must become part of the fashion of the beaded doll as we all know a lot about AIDS now." This dynamic change in the AIDS grapheme appears as a symbolic gesture to build meaning on the maturing AIDS epidemic and also, I believe, relates to her growing knowledge on the subject.

According to Fokosile Ngema (personal communication May 20, 2004) it is also perfectly "true" that colours become secondary to the literate meaning that is being conveyed in the narrative cloths she produces. To this end, some of her highly unusual cloths are fully beaded narrative texts which detail complex stories about Zulu wars, sharing wealth, domestic dilemmas and illness such as AIDS. In Chapter 7 this topic is taken up again in an indepth discussion of how and why she feels it important to produce beaded cloths which she herself cannot read, and what messages she is intent on transmitting, or rather, who is the intended audience to 'read' the cloths.

Further attempts at interpreting and decoding Zulu beadwork by Mthethwa (1988) tend to explain why, historically, a singularly literate style could not be sanctioned in beadwork. His theory, according to his findings, is based on the understanding that the function of beads was meant to transmit love messages secretly, and as love messages are considered a very private matter in Zulu tradition it would not be advisable to send love messages which 'lack secrecy' i.e. making use of modern writing forms. He further claims (1988:35) that "the basic grammar of beadwork consists of colours and shapes; and sometimes the actual length or even size of a piece can change the meaning." In harmony with this portrayal of colour expression is a personal communication (June 14 2004) with *izangoma* Agnes Xaba, who adamantly states the 'amount' of colour in any given context (beadwork, dreams, apparel, nature) is important. Interpretation within the supernatural world and messages from the *amadlozi* (ancestors) are closely associated

with colour. For example, if a snake is seen close-by (the exact nature of its whereabouts would be important), it would be necessary to talk of the dominant snakeskin colour. This knowledge can provide succinct information on what exact message the *amadlozi* were attempting to transmit.

Mthethwa (1988) refers to religious Shembe¹ beadwork as 'secular' and notes that when properly dressed in 'holy' dress, in other words, in the appropriate heavenly uniform, the beadwork carries biblical codes. Although the very specific Shembe beadwork range of colours seldom varies, sometimes the actual beadwork designs may change and this, in turn, may change meaning and the interpretation thereof. He claims that the basic vocabulary is never rigid; there are numerous permutations, but it is always context-sensitive (1988:37). He stresses that as an original piece of art, beadwork must satisfy the aesthetic sense of both the maker and the wearer. Supportive of the notion that the basic activity of beadwork construction is both creative and emotive, he states that the meaning may, in fact, become secondary to the actual production. More importantly in his text, and aligning with the theory proposed by this thesis, he asserts that "in the past, beads solved some of the cultural injustices created by sexual differences by enabling women to initiate a love affair with men of their choice." He concludes with the educational proposal that "in today's society we might introduce beadwork games for children" (1988:39). If it is the function of beadwork to both inform and educate then his proposal in 1988 appears as an opportunity missed within the current context of HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal.

Mostly supporting Mthethwa's view, Van Wyk (2004) claims that the Zulu culture is essentially 'iconoclastic' in practice, and that this stance is, in turn, supported by Dube (cited in Van Wyk 2004:3) who states that among the Zulu, even as late as the 1920s "any person making an image of any living thing is committing an impropriety." This view has been noted in my own research when undertaking early investigations into historical beaded cloth doll and tableau making practice in KwaZulu-Natal. A disconcerting case study involved expert beadworker Sizakhele Mchunu, who in the mid 80s constructed a beaded cloth tableau of a dead baby in a coffin, depicting her

personal experience of this distressing event. It was not long before she too had lost her own life in childbirth. Sadly up until this event most of her beaded creations depicted the joys of motherhood (Thorpe 1994). Although it is well documented that her death was due to lack of medical attention (1994:75) and according to Preston-Whyte (1988), this fact highlights the level of deprivation in the lives of the rural women both in apartheid South Africa as well as today, there is no discussion about the ramifications of her depiction of 'living things' in her artwork. As Preston-Whyte states of the work of Sizakhele, as a creative leader in her community, "her (beaded tableau) sculptures were complex and thought-provoking; and reveal Sizakhele's reflections on her social position and that of those around her..."(1988:70). Undoubtedly she was an innovator and a leader of a small group of craftswomen, mostly family, who paid great attention to detail, concentrated on the human form and sought to realistically portray everyday situations which appealed to her artistic nature. It is also not clear whether her co-wives and her sister are fully reconciled with the notion that her death was not due to some other force. (Personal communication Celani Njoyeza 10 February 2005)

It is worth noting that numerous examples of even more vivid and real life situations exist in the *Siyazama* Project collection. Chapter Six of this thesis explains these in detail. It appears that not a lot has changed since Preston-Whyte claimed "acute observation of details in the lives of (her) subjects and a genuine interest in their social circumstances". This is still found to be prevalent in the work of the rural craftswomen today (1986:72).

If, as Van Wyk writes, non-figurative abstract art was the perceived mode for the visual arts of the Zulu then within this, beadwork, was the key fundamental activity. Van Wyk (2004:3) notes five signficatory functions of beadwork within the Zulu culture. Firstly, beadwork, he cites, is a signifier of identity and denotes regional difference. Secondly, beadwork is a spiritual art. This point finds support among anthropologists and craft researchers. Thirdly, beadwork maps typologies and "allows social identities to be read and fourthly it is a "vehicle of self-expression" by both the wearer and the maker. Lastly he speaks of how the beadwork "mirrors the function of language." He fails to

clarify whether he is referring to a spoken or written language or possibly both – an important distinction and one that requires further analysis.

According to anthropologist and beadwork researcher Hilgard Schoeman (1975:3) the functional art of traditional beadwork is closely linked to courtship and marriage. He notes how 'love messages' are often but not always incorporated into the beadwork. "The highly specialized, technically advanced cultures of East and West have come to regard technology as referring almost exclusively to material levels of human achievement as found in the modern world of commerce and industry. The inclusions of intricate symbolic systems such as written languages are axiomatically accepted. This materialistic view is strangely blind to the fact that human creativity is a jewel of many facets. If from one point of view technology is simply applied ingenuity, it should not surprise us to find a social technology in Zulu culture which is more advanced than in societies preoccupied with the hard facts of economics rather than the equally intricate problems of inter-personal relationships." In my view the beaded cloth doll making of the *Siyazama* Project in KwaZulu-Natal is one such applied ingenuity and social technology. It has its roots in a long tradition to portray social representations in a culturally appropriate form. As Preston-Whyte (1998:66) and Jolles (1994) describe it: depicting and displaying an acknowledgement of cultural awareness, societal values, and moral perspectives, the dolls have historically been and still are a visual record of experiences, influences and aspirations of the makers.

When talking of beadwork and coded messages, Schoeman (1975) prefers to explain the interpretation as "a spontaneous experience rather different from the systematic translation of symbols one could expect in other societies." However he believes it is possible to gain a general overall impression of the position and role it may play in courtship and marriage. Schoeman maintains that it is the cultural prescriptions which dictate that women should not talk openly of love and even less so of sex. This, he claims, would be classified as taboo in a relationship. Yet communication on sensitive topics was customarily acceptable in the language of beadwork in which messages, often

of a romantic and intimate nature, are transmitted. He undertook a detailed analysis of Zulu beadwork between 1964 and 1968 and he suggests that it often contained messages of love and desire, whilst forming a primary and colourful vocabulary for rural women, who faced, and still do face, many constraints in a patrilineal and patriarchal society. Konigkramer, author of *Know the Past, Wear the Future*, explains this point further with his claim that "Beads were, in a very real sense, a mirror of culture and tell us much about the social, political, economic and religious lives of the people. They help define a people's concept of beauty." (1989:3)

Klopper (1999) provides us with an account of how she believes that the beadwork colour symbolism not only influenced anthropologists but also "spawned an avalanche of popular material on the meaning of particular beadwork colours, including a tourist industry in 'beaded love letters' with printed explanations of particular colours attached to them." Moreover she maintains that this has led to 'trivializing' of the complex system of communication that undoubtedly underlies the traditional beadwork practice, not only in KwaZulu-Natal but throughout Southern Africa (1999:85).

While this view may have some substance, it is worth acknowledging that this 'trivializing' effect has inadvertently become a major craft industry which supports and supplies economic benefits to hundreds of thousands of rural beadworkers in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal. The majority of these rural women would not have any other method available for them to engage within the informal sector.

Contemporary beadwork, according to Hilgard Schoeman in his book *The Zulu* (1975) adheres to a strict scheme of rules and regulations, some of which stipulate that to break these rules could be considered tantamount to 'naughtiness'. His claim, in 1975, that for married women to be seen wearing white beads would have appeared 'ridiculous' has implications for both the female and the male as the white beads generally mean virginity and spirituality. This notion seems almost trivial when considering the modern

implications of contemporary fashion and just how much 'rule breaking' there is today, three decades later. Yet he asserts that some rules were deliberately broken in order to give particular colours or objects a negative connotation, and that this has been a relatively new development. Hilgard Schoeman (1971; 1975) writes of the meaning of beadwork or the 'reading' of coded beadwork as a spontaneous experience rather different from the systematic translation of symbols one would expect in other societies. Zulu beadwork, he believes (1971:52) "reflects most admirably the cultural personality of a people concerned with social relationships rather than the Western technological individualism." Further to this he attests to the theory that any satisfactory explanation of Zulu beadwork must remain beyond the realms of understanding from a Western point of view, and that only a very general overview of its role would be at all possible.

Stan Schoeman (1996) boldly claims in his *Brief Historical review of Traditional African Beadwork in Africa, South of the Sahara*, of the uniqueness of Zulu beadwork and how it differs from most other bead craft cultures because of its ability to hold and transmit messages through colour coding. According to him: "What makes Zulu beadwork unique, however, is the code by which particular colours are selected and combined in various ways to shape messages that at the same time are woven into decorative geometrical designs. The geometric shapes themselves have particular significance and the craft itself forms an intricate communicational system devoted entirely to the expression of ideas, feelings and facts related to behaviour and relations between the sexes." (1996:2)

What is revealed by this historical research review is the lack of factual evidence and information to backup these claims. As it is all mostly hearsay, considerable caution needs to be taken when considering these ideas. Labelle (2005:166) writes that the scholarly research into beadwork art form is in its infancy, and that "sellers of beadwork at the tourist market are never short of meanings to offer for beadwork colours and designs."

Brottem and Lang (1973:8) explain how some of the older Zulu beadwork collection within the Robert Hull Fleming Museum of the University of Vermont in Burlington, USA, was bequeathed to the university by the Reverend Lewis Grout, an American Presbyterian missionary in Umsunduzi, KwaZulu-Natal, between 1847 and 1862. This rare and very important collection, consisting of beaded jewellery, arm bands, anklets and bags depicts the work of female Zulu beadworkers prior to the arrival of Europeans. Grout was succeeded at the mission by his friend and neighbour Josiah Tyler who continued in the mode of beadwork collection and who, in turn, also made a gift of his collection to the university museum, thus adding to an already impressive collection. By far the most significant range of beadwork in this collection for this particular study is the range of “love letters” or *ubala abuyisse* meaning “One writes in order that the other should reply.” (1973:11)

Brottem and Lang take this point further when they write that the “Zulu donned various types of beadwork corresponding to stages of development from childhood to adulthood” (1973:11) and that the “most symbolic of beadwork communicated both publicly and privately the state of one’s love life.” The “love letter” pieces were highly sought after, especially by the young men, who proudly displayed them as a token of their popularity with females. The more beadwork one wore, the more wealth to support wives and status one was deemed to enjoy.

Citing the notion of beadwork creating a ‘tension’ and possibly embarking on some ‘rule breaking’ techniques, this USA collection also displays examples of how sometimes beaded formations were constructed deliberately to confuse and mislead. Brottem refers to this procedure as the use of ‘stray’ beads and notes that as these occurrences mostly appeared in “love letter” beaded formations, it seems fair to assume that they also formed part of the message. The maker would include an odd bead colour into the beaded design and therefore create extra interest in the message. Explaining this notion further the author notes that “the beads may also have been deliberately placed to break the repetitive rhythm of a design on either aesthetic or magical grounds, or both.” (1973:13)

Nonetheless, and in support of these ideas as beadwork having an inherent colour coded system, and as interpreted and explained by the *Siyazama* Project female beadwork producers in May 2003, there appears some solidarity in the range of related meanings only when it comes to the role of white beads in today's Zulu culture. The traditional beadworkers seem convinced of the multiple roles that white beads portray and the explicit meanings thereof. The historical research which describes white beads as symbols of purity and virginity, and proposes that they should be worn by young virgins only, seems ironic when explained by contemporary married Zulu women who, in turn, are promoting the wearing of white beadwork around both head and ankles. A further example of this point is that the range of meanings does not appear static, but rather varied and broad, as some have even described white beads as symbols of luck. Much more is said of this contemporary colour symbolism and the meanings of other colours are discussed in communication with the *Siyazama* producers in Chapter Six.

It is Jolles (1993:50) who first introduces the early beadwork styles and beaded doll making attributes of Mrs Lobolile Ximba and her mother Mrs Hluphekile (MaMchunu) Zuma in his *African Arts* publication on "Traditional Zulu Beadwork of the Msinga Area." These women, and their neighbours and friends, are expert traditional beadwork producers and they have all been instrumental in building the identity of the work so far in the *Siyazama* Project. Their work is truly an example of how beadwork styles have adapted and changed due to the external forces like the cost and availability of glass beads, transport costs, market forces and now, cultural and health implications.

Calling for more substantial research to be undertaken on the topic of beadwork trends, Jolles makes an important point, as far as this dissertation is concerned, when he states that beadwork styles are continually evolving and changing. Schoeman (1968:64), cited in Jolles, puts it like this: "The true artistry of ornamental beadwork lies in the creative effort concerned with the modification of traditional colour schemes that form part of regional or tribal

conventions. It presents a worthy challenge to intelligence, ingenuity and poetic sensitivity.” Jolles supports the notion that these brave and creative explorations often constitute new and stylistic departures in style. It seems completely reasonable to keep styles updated and dynamic, so that the actual activity of beadwork is kept fresh and new.

Twala (1951), Schoeman (1968) and Jolles (1993) state that all traditional beadwork is recognizable as to its region or tribe of origin by its colour schemes. This fact prevails today and with no less impact than it did before. As evidenced in the styles of all modern Zulu beadwork, the cultural ideology of the maker is wholly identifiable, and not only by colour, but by construction and overall decoration techniques. Although it may now, in 2006, have a more trendy ‘fashionable’ look, I believe it is no less functional in its primary role and is imbued with no less aesthetic sensitivity than before. I also believe it can and does straddle two distinct styles, as Jolles makes cautionary mention of; both the traditional conformity and the encompassment of enhanced individual creativity.

Linking these ideas, Labelle (2005) cites the demise of apartheid as the time in which traditional costume (including beadwork) has evidently been worn in a more obvious way “in order to re-establish a link with the ancestors.” (2005:164) Moreover, Proctor and Kloppe (as cited in Labelle 2005:164) believe that “the wearing of beads has become, above all, a means of establishing and expressing a relationship with an independent African past. For this reason, modern beadwork draws heavily on the forms, skills and symbolic power of the past, but has nothing to do with a return to any actual or particular past. On the contrary, wearing beadwork usually attests to the creation of new and often conflicting and contradictory identities and social relationships.” In addition Labelle (2005:165) includes past president of South Africa Nelson Mandela in this debate by discussing how he has avoided wearing traditional clothing derived from his home region. Other than in court appearances in the early 1960s, he has been shown to prefer to wear clothing imprinted with common African motifs so as to avoid the suggestion of “his attachment to a particular ethnic group in South Africa, for fear of nullifying his

message of national unity.” Believing that it is the buyers (of beadwork) who are being “seduced by a marvelous tale that they half believe” by the beadworkers, Labelle (2005:167) claims that it is tourism jargon claiming that beadwork has hidden codes and messages, and that this talk is simply a “sales pitch” based on colour, symbolism and mystery, often unknown to the makers themselves. In addition she believes that many do not either wear beads or know of their original function, and that the goal of the sales pitch is to reinvigorate the beadwork’s lost emotional dimension.

Yet, in my opinion, contemporary beadwork from throughout the continent of Africa, including Kenyan Maasai beaded ornaments, the Xhosa styles from neighbouring Eastern Cape regions, as well as the current styles of Zulu beadwork has been responsible for spreading the message of a single African nation that encompasses and embraces all of the continent’s peoples, religions and beliefs. I have had numerous personal experiences of interactions from many people on the continent who each unequivocally congratulate me on the beadwork jewelry that I am wearing.

The beadworkers of the Msinga region are nationally and internationally acclaimed for their high level abilities, individuality and creativity in beadwork styles to this day, but it is their skill as doll makers which set them apart. An article on the small group of female doll makers from the Msinga region, by Jolles (1993), details the beginnings of this unusual technique of beadwork construction and records some of the prevalent concerns and assumptions at the time of its publication. It is interesting to note the tone in which he questions the role of the ‘culture-brokers’ who have played a role in intervening in the themes and styles of the doll making artform. His concern is with the interventionists who could well limit the inventiveness of the maker and thereby control and shut down her own cultural distinctiveness in her artwork. She would then be creating beadwork which is mediated and shaped by others before it reaches the buying market. Jolles (1993:57) speaks of a more enterprising model in which the producer could be encouraged to “reassert the aesthetic criteria of her own culture” and so risk challenging the notion of interference by others. As has occurred in the *Siyazama* Project this

practice had led to a proliferation of beadwork material which proudly identifies the maker with her culture, mostly realistically; with warts and all. Jolles goes on to complete his essay with "...these dolls are no longer purely decorative artifacts, but documents of the social processes of their time." (1993:69)

Fokosile Ngema (aged 68) a beadwork producer in *Siyazama* states "this doll making has a specific purpose to us, as the Zulus. The dolls we make symbolize our culture, the way we dress and the way our grandparents used to dress. It's like we are continuing our dress code so that our grandchildren will see how we used to dress. We choose the colours according to age. The young ladies and the older women do not wear the same colours and we always do it that way." (Personal communication 7 August 2004)

In the Valley of a Thousand Hills there existed beaded cloth doll making in a slightly different capacity and form to those of the Msinga makers. This three dimensional craft form is the beaded cloth sculptures or tableaux made by the rural craftswomen who reside in this Valley. These soft cloth beaded tableaux were directly fostered by Jo Thorpe, Director of the African Art Centre in Durban. She encouraged the beadworkers to continue with this most unique art form from the very first time Sizakhele Mnchunu-Nojiyeza brought a tableau in to sell in the early 1980s. Sizakhele Mnchunu-Nojiyeza and Thembi Mnchunu are unrelated and are both credited with the origin of the tableau making art forms. They lived as neighbours separated by a river. Sizakhele was particularly adept at making the 'activity' sculptures and researchers agree that she was a highly creative, imaginative and talented beadworker. Two of her most renowned sculptures 'Birth on a hospital bed' and 'Baby in a coffin' are in the South African Museum in Cape Town. Indeed many of these sculptures were to produce a 'shock' response rather than to entertain, according to Preston-Whyte (1988:67), and have become well-known for their social commentary. The work in the *Siyazama* Collection bears testimony to this view as much of the tableau work is most graphically explicit in both content and context.

Thembi, on the other hand, was the innovator of the soft beaded cloth sculptures, and this category includes both dolls and animals. She was joined by a relatively small group of co-wives, neighbours and friends amounting to no more than twelve women in total. Celani Nojiyeza, co-wife of the late Sizakhele, and a prolific and talented beadwork producer, has been working in the *Siyazama* project since its inception. Labelle (2005) believes that this new beadwork form was given a new life force through its unique approach of including a narrative or a story. Thorpe (1994) makes it clear that that this new form was as a result of the lack of sales in the smaller beaded jewelry and curio items. Thembi Mnchunu, as far back as 1984, recognized that unusual beaded items were often sold at relatively high prices and it was this observation that spurred the new technique of tableaux. Nonetheless, the beaded cloth tableaux were intricately detailed stage settings which depicted aspects of everyday life. This art form created a fresh insight into the world of the 'other' and provided tourists with a new opportunity to encounter a mysterious and unknown world.

In 1983 and 1985 the African Art Centre held two successful exhibitions which displayed the range of the creative efforts by the small group of beadworkers. Thorpe (1994:78) recalls "This exhibition ... shows a growing reflection of the artists on the things round about them, both rural and urban. The subject matter grows weekly..." Both Thorpe and Preston-Whyte agree that the bead-cloth sculpture activity changed the lives of the women at that time, and that through this they attained some measure of economic empowerment and personal development.

It is almost ten years ago (1997) that I began my first creative involvement with this small group of rural traditional craftswomen, and it was two years later that we employed the red ribbon logo as the metaphoric vehicle for engaging in AIDS educational workshops. Their work with the embedded logo is by no means less intriguing, stirring and valuable. On the contrary, many citations and researchers have agreed about its unusual ability to inform and promote dialogue on AIDS (Preston-Whyte 1994; Thorpe 1994; Jolles 1994; Guille 2005; Labelle 2005; Wells, Conolly and Sienaert 2004). The

beadworkers are continuing in their social commentary and methodology exactly as before, it is just that now their 'voices' are joined in a chorus which speaks of the hardship of AIDS and its consequences for rural women.

HIV/AIDS AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Studies on HIV/AIDS and women in the region are germane to this current thesis. It was the arrival of this new disease that sparked a new energy force within the beadworkers of KwaZulu-Natal and also provided the *Siyazama* Project with its brand identity.

In the words of Beauty Ndlovu, a *Siyazama* beadwork producer since 1996: "I continue to be at *Siyazama* because it helps me and my family a lot, it helps to sell my beadwork and I gain knowledge and information on designs and I get different ideas. My involvement at *Siyazama* hasn't been easy because of transport problems. I have to catch almost three taxis to get here. AIDS education at *Siyazama* has helped me a lot because I have taken my knowledge from *Siyazama* and explained to my children and family about the dangers of AIDS and preventions and that it does not kill if you look after yourself. I used to be scared of AIDS but not anymore since I get information about it." (Personal communication 7 August 2004)

Judge Edwin Cameron, a prominent South African who disclosed his HIV positive status in 2000, bears testimony to the range of taboos and myths which continue to abound around the AIDS condition. In his text *Witness to AIDS*, he discusses and exposes the broad scientific spectrum of this "most scrutinized and studied and analyzed disease in the history of medicine" (2005:43) most fittingly. In sharp contrast he also notes how much is yet to be understood and known about AIDS. As I write this thesis in 2006, UNAIDS estimate that there are as many as 42 million people worldwide affected whilst other agencies tout a higher number and inflate the figure to well over 65 million infections. In Southern Africa UNAIDS claims that 57% of all HIV positive people are women and in the age group 15-24 this figure rises to 75%. Whilst it is clear that the numbers are, and can only be, for the most part

rough estimates, and although based on well established methods of disease projection, there typically remains a high degree of controversy and suspicion surrounding these figures.

According to Nattrass (2004), South Africa is infamous for its obfuscation and prevarication on AIDS policy, claiming that neither a Constitutional Court ruling on Mother to Child Transmission Prevention (PMTCT) intervention in 2002 nor the acceptance that anti-retroviral therapy (ART) is beneficial has helped it change course. She argues that an implicit moral economy of triage informs the South African government's policy on AIDS. Crothers, Alexander and Uys all claim (as cited in Nattrass 2004) that the contemporary contours of sexual culture are a vitally important dimension of the AIDS pandemic. They believe that understanding this, in the context of rural KwaZulu-Natal, may contribute to our knowledge of HIV transmission, the vulnerability of all women and of the challenges faced by interventions designed to change behaviour.

Gow and Desmond (2002:23) claim that HIV/AIDS in South Africa is undoubtedly one of the greatest unresolved challenges of our time and most especially for women. With HIV prevalence rates at antenatal clinics in KwaZulu-Natal exceeding 40%, these authors claim that there is still reluctance on the part of the South African government to allow independent researchers access to information which details how the annual HIV surveillance system is conducted. The first antenatal survey was conducted in 1990 (Department of National Health and Population Development, 1995, cited in Gow 2002) and whilst it is recognized as being reliable, its weakness seems to be a lack of consistency in the sampling frame. "The survey is an anonymous, voluntary (in that women are allowed to refuse to be tested), unlinked, cross-sectional survey of residual blood specimens which are collected for routine syphilis and rhesus testing, conducted among pregnant women attending public antenatal clinics for the first time during their current pregnancy. The survey is conducted concurrently over nine provinces during October each year. All provinces are said to 'follow the protocol closely' (Department of Health 2001) although rumours still persist about some

provinces..." (2002:23). Further aggravating this inaccuracy of surveillance, the authors state that the under representation of non pregnant women and richer women who may attend private antenatal clinics, is problematic. In general, this government survey, most undemocratically, circumvents women of other races and represents black women only.

There is no doubt that the black female population in South Africa is the most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Gow and Desmond attempt to explain one of the reasons for this as being a "cultural difference in sex behaviour" and the way "dry sex" is favoured and practised among the black population, leaving women more physically vulnerable to infection (2002:26). Citing other implicating factors which can be attributed, they list extremely low income, social affects of forced removals, the migrant labour system and the breakdown of traditional society all leading to the disintegration of sexual mores and the erosion of traditional values. Compounding this is the fact that rural women occupy a lower social position than men and their inability to insist on safer sex practices seemingly makes them all the more susceptible to infection.

Yet statistics measuring the urban-rural differentials in an early study by McAnerey in 1994 (as cited in Gow 2002:32) show that prevalence was generally lower in rural communities than in the urban areas at that time. "The explanation for the low prevalence levels in rural areas may lie in the limited scope for sexual networking in isolated communities, as well as the greater influence of traditional practices." (2002:33) Unfortunately more recent sentinel studies conducted by Wilkinson, Connolly and Rotchford in 1999 (as cited in Gow 2002:33) have shown that within the HIV/AIDS prevalence statistics the rural and urban areas have mostly caught up with each other due, in part, to the increasingly superior transport system and migrant labour practices which link rural communities with the work laden cities in South Africa. Circumstantially this division of labour creates a contested hot house situation for both genders which supports the growth of relationship infidelity and multiple sexual partnerships, whilst endorsing strong masculine behaviour as perfectly acceptable. In Zulu culture *hlonipha* is the mode of behavioural

conduct which a female is expected to adhere to at all times and it is within this mode of conduct that she is exposed to some of the most dangerous sexual behavioural mores. According to Raum (1973) in Zulu society *hlonipha* (respectful restraint) is a sociological phenomenon of powerful practical importance which talks of the avoidances and taboos imbedded in the culture. These prescriptions still largely apply today.

Throughout this thesis, and duly elaborated on in Chapter Five, I attempt to demonstrate how much significance the traditional rural craftswomen in *Siyazama* attach to the role of *hlonipha* in their lives today, and how much it has impacted on their day-to-day behaviours and lifestyles. In Raum's (1973:1) unique and important study he shows us that the list of *hlonipha* rules and regulations is an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is raised. The rules link in each instance an inferior to a superior status in traditional forms of expressing deference, the link not being without some reciprocity. This system of restraints is felt by many Zulu to be an essential identifying marker of Zulu culture and its preservation viewed as vital to the maintenance of ethnicity.

Amongst the most significant ethnographic studies undertaken in South Africa are those by researchers Leclerc-Madlala and Wojcicki (as cited in Nattrass 2004:146). Their research describes the unacceptably high level of sexual violence against women. Claiming this situation to be 'endemic' and one in which rape is sometimes considered 'a normal recreational activity', these researchers clearly make the point that any intervention which aims to promote behaviour change must look into the sexual culture of the community or society under study.

To this end Nattrass supports the notion of relationship sexual counseling and training to couples, rather than individuals, as she believes this procedure does not disenfranchise or threaten men. She describes how a participatory workshop programme in the Gambia was successful because it focused on infertility prevention, deemed important by men, rather than on family planning and HIV education; its prime focus. Further to this she claims that with sexual

education it seems advisable to work within the perimeter of the problem rather than directly with the problem and to link with something that is a direct male concern. In this case it was infertility: an important issue for all men.

A similar process is evident in the *Siyazama* Project. Although the rural male partners are not directly involved in the training and educational workshops, they are not only the direct recipients of the information but are also, importantly, beneficiaries of the most welcome financial income which their partners are bringing into the homestead on a fairly regular basis. This augmented cash earning, I believe, is a singularly powerful force for all who live in poverty stricken rural areas and has led to the men of *Siyazama* showing support for their partners' attendance in the workshops.

For example, becoming 'informed' on the importance of sexual fidelity, and AIDS awareness, may have a different meaning and impact when it means extra cash resources. 'Informed' in this case meaning that the information has been duly received, but may not be fully articulated nor deemed appropriate to apply, due to other social pressures such as the need to prove manliness or simply rejecting any (sexual) advice from a woman. On the other hand, the growing sexual economy of transactional sex, according to Leclerc-Madlala, an outcome of the post-apartheid political economy, shows that women's sexual behaviour is most definitely a product of economic circumstances. This author is also of the opinion that interventions at the level of individual behaviour and sexual culture seem unlikely to be very successful (Nattrass 2004:148). Concerned with this and addressing the ramifications of this notion, this thesis also lends support to the argument that poverty must be addressed as a major component in any strategy to combat HIV/AIDS effectively and efficiently, and it is the women themselves who must be empowered.

The submersion and the silence which surrounds any form of kinship conflict is typical of African families and this is often characterized by submission to one's husband or male partner regardless of character, behaviour or personality (Kayongo-Male and Onyango 1984). In many African groupings

conflict avoidance within the rural household is common and verbal arguments between males and females are rare. Any form of open discussion and direct confrontation between the conflicting parties would be frowned upon. According to the authors Kayongo-Male and Onyango (1984) the preferred method of serious conflict would be to manage resolution through witchcraft or sorcery, or at best to send the argumentative offender, mostly female, away.

African sociologists such as Kayongo-Male and Onyango (1984:98), attest to the underlying tension which is created, not only by unequal opportunities between kinship members, but by the African family ethic of reciprocity. In other words those who advance must help those who have been less fortunate. Opportunities for advancement are seldom similar for all family members, therefore family goals may often result in conflict. The inequalities of role allocation among the household members often result in wife-beating, fighting among the children or depression of members, especially the women. Exacerbating this conflict is the well-meaning role of developmental programmes which often favour one sex over the other creating further tension and conflict.

Similar cultural values, to a greater or lesser degree, apply to the rural beadworkers living in KwaZulu-Natal. Their traditional craft making ability in beadwork not only has the potential to improve quality of life, but also as history has shown us, shows promise of bringing new knowledge as well as bringing stories of their vibrant cultural ideologies into the present.

An understanding of gender and power relations in rural KwaZulu-Natal is crucial as this can provide a more culturally sensitive basis for designing and implementing meaningful developmental approaches which will ultimately empower women to have greater control over their lives, physically and financially.

DESIGN, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY

Contemporary South African society has seen and experienced its fair share of change both before and after the first democratic elections held in 1994. Apartheid has had a huge impact and it will take a major shift in consciousness to overcome the impact of the past regime. No doubt this process will take some time. A social revolution has clearly transformed the political landscape and for the most part the population is still reacting to, interpreting and attempting to adjust to these major shifts. If one considers the work of the political artists during the pre-1994 era, it was antagonistic, aggressive, manipulative and confrontational. According to Kauffman and Martin (2004) they defiantly had much to say and the target audience was clearly identified. Yet, after 1994 "it seemed that a number of artists with powerful messages in the pre-1994 era had lost their voices. Some turned inward to explore personal narratives and dramas, investigating identity, sexual and gender politics and roles, while others delved into history and memory. Few confronted the AIDS crisis. Why?" (2003:5)

The AIDS statistics are shocking and depressing and in many ways it seems that our political leaders have preferred to take the denialist's stance. They have turned a virus into a voiceless and political viewpoint. Similarly few artists in South Africa have confronted the AIDS crisis. Kauffman and Martin (2003) offer some possible answers in this respect. They suggest that possibly artists do not feel the deep personal connection to the issue of AIDS that they did to apartheid. Perhaps, after the long struggle for political freedom, socially engaged artists were weary and feel the need for more personal, non-political subjects for their work. The question of sales is one of the most important issues with artworks and so there is also the possibility that art works on the subject of AIDS may not be salable to a wider audience.

The result of this situation is that the few artists who have approached the HIV/AIDS pandemic constitute a small but growing legion of activists who aim to contribute to the ongoing debate and to the better understanding of the AIDS condition in our society. Their ability to communicate their opinions

powerfully and emotively is clear. Supporting this view AIDS activist Pieter-Dirk Uys (as cited in Kauffman 2003:4) writes: "If a political cartoon can rattle the foundations of fascism and a vicious punchline can send the perpetrators of evil running for their reputations, art becomes the ultimate weapon of mass destruction when it comes to the unspoken roar and the silent scream."

Zapiro, a prominent South African cartoonist, claims (as cited in Kauffman 2003), that AIDS is now the single biggest subject in his work. Through his cartoons he has attempted to inform, understand, chronicle and communicate aspects of the pandemic such as prevention, governmental lack of commitment to treatment, notifiability, funding, misspending, stigmatization, misconceptions, the dissidents, denialism and conspiracy theories. He intends for his cartoons to communicate through satire his outrage at the government's callousness towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

Zapiro is not alone in his creative attempts to transfer complex and puzzling health and social information to his audience through his visual narratives. In the United Kingdom there is a growing body of researchers, including medical practitioners, anthropologists and artists who understand the power of information transfer through the arts, and the literature demonstrates how community-based arts in health projects have developed into successful models in addressing some of the social ills experienced by a society undergoing rapid change. Operating out of the University of Durham in the United Kingdom, the Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine (CAHHM) provides for five completely different projects, each addressing its own set of issues. I had the opportunity of doing field research at one of their projects called 'Looking Well' situated in a rural town North Bentham, Yorkshire. Through a series of art activities and community consultations in 1995, the health needs of the local population were identified. These consultations revealed high levels of depression, loneliness and isolation amongst people of all ages and, in particular, women. Other health issues identified were lack of opportunities for physical activity and shared play for children, poor access to local authority and health services, increasing levels of stress among children, poor diet and bullying.

This region of the United Kingdom is also sparsely populated with the lowest percentage nationwide of males in full-time employment. It also has a high proportion of single parent families. 'Looking Well's' activities fit within a needs-led philosophy and are articulated through participating in arts activities and through communication and conversation. They use an 'organic' approach to development and are informed through the project's user group with ongoing review and evaluation. Activities involve working together with parents and children, initiating annual ritual lantern festivals and harvest celebrations, focusing on women and their needs, seeking out the older population in the towns and encouraging their active involvement, activities with people with mental health problems, counseling of cancer groups, developing community gardens, engaging with training and education and, finally arranging local and national exhibitions of the artworks.

Authors Everitt and Hamilton (2003) in their evaluative report on the CAHHM projects believe that, in the United Kingdom, the arts and health projects have helped to implement policy proprieties in a range of sectors encompassing social welfare, education and health. Clearly their work has helped shape developmental strategies to promote well-being and to encourage active citizenship. By providing people with opportunities to engage in arts activities at community level the research has demonstrated a significant shift in addressing social inequalities. Importantly, the notion of care in the community is said to be revived with the provision of (health care) services being rationed appropriately i.e. no longer only the domain of the female.

Mike White, Director of Arts in Health at CAHHM, reflects on the similarities between 'Looking Well' and the *Siyazama* Project in his 2005 paper titled 'Establishing Common Ground in Community-based Arts in Health'. Both have adapted to rural locations and their health needs, but he believes both have been linked to a wider world. Both have introduced new art making (techniques) within the regeneration of traditional cultural forms. Both have found a catalytic role for art in generating a range of social, educational and economic benefits within a community health framework. White states that he

has found both projects to be personally felt and domestic in context as they both place a high regard on personal and positive respect among people. Further to this both projects have developed organically rather than strategically and have created pathways for individual attainment, dignity and healthier lifestyle.

White comments thus: "Internationally a growing number of arts projects are attempting to establish a continuum of support for people whose health is at risk to improve both their well-being and creative skills. Much of the practice and learning going on in this field can usefully contribute to wider health promotion strategies and the development of participatory arts with the general public. They need not to be seen just as specialist services for vulnerable communities, but rather as core applications of the arts to encourage healthy cultures in healthier nations." (2005:23)

Supporting the *Siyazama* project's mobilization against the scourge of AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, Labelle (2005) writes of how the beaded crafts from the project are disseminated on an international scale. Noting that many of these works have an important narrative aspect, she highlights (2005:168) several of the project's tableaux such as the AIDS orphan tableau, beaded dolls depicting the married women *makoti*'s, the beaded crucifixes, which all account for the "dramatic representations of AIDS as it is lived on a daily basis, or evocations of traditional mythology." In addition Labelle (p.169) claims that "such works express cries of despair that must be clear and obvious to all" in the attempt to create global awareness. She acknowledges the value and history of beads which she considers "are still participating in the protection of individuals through the preventive information diffused by these works and the subsidies that their sale brings to women and children in need" (2005:169).

In South Africa there are a growing number of organizations and projects which link art activities with HIV/AIDS and health information. Most, but not all, are attached to tertiary institutions and their work is largely community-based, with the resultant craft product(s) aspiring for a place in the market.

Phumani Paper, a project led by Kim Berman and situated in the University of Johannesburg, claims that over 250 sustainable employment opportunities have been created through its handmade paper making programme (Guille 2005). The communities that have been targeted are predominantly unemployed rural women and people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

At the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban the 'Artists Action Around AIDS' campaign and programme has, since 2003, been busy with responding to the needs of communities and the emergence of visual arts workers. According to Bren Brophy, Cultural Arts consultant at the HIVAN (Centre for HIV/AIDS Networking) their vision is to contribute to the development of a culture of human rights and a better dispensation for communities touched by HIV/AIDS (personal communication February 6, 2006). To this end numerous national workshops, presentations and exhibitions are organized around the theme of the campaign.

Monkey Biz, lead by renowned South African ceramist Barbara Jackson, is an internationally recognized Cape Town based organisation which has achieved success in terms of contemporary design exploration on behalf of unemployed and HIV/AIDS infected and affected bead working women in the Western Cape. Utilising the practice of strong design direction and intervention, their resultant products are both colourful and modern. They largely comprise tall and slim beaded dolls as well as fully beaded animals which are sold locally, nationally and internationally.

Indepth fieldwork and research data has shown that two important factors, product development and marketing, are vital for sustainable enterprise, and if absent, will detrimentally affect the success of the project (Guille 2005). Design direction is a key component. Projects seem to falter and fail if this aspect is missing no matter how much goodwill is attached to them. Further to this, this study has shown that there is a lack of the embedded value of traditional craft making attached to the craft practice within most of these projects. The *Siyazama* Project is, I believe, unique in this arena as the rural women were making their beaded cloth dolls long before the HIV/AIDS

intervention began. The craft work in the *Siyazama* project is never mediated, assigned nor imposed as is often the case today with numerous projects involving rural craftspeople.

A review of past literature relevant to the AIDS and art interface, in which this current study is situated, provides an opportunity not only to identify anthropological gaps in the historical record, but it also allows for an identification of the links which thread together the field of traditional craft, the lives of rural craftswomen, and their unavoidable predicament in the southern African AIDS pandemic. Women and AIDS literature reveals their vulnerability as females in a patriarchal environment, and how their customary practices could be seen to be working against them in this era of AIDS. Simply put, the data has shown that their quiet, respectable adherence and tolerance to their social systems can be life-threatening and dangerous.

A review of beadwork craft in KwaZulu-Natal provides us with an account of the beadworkers' keen eye for colour and form: an inherent ability learnt from their mothers, which continues to be passed down to their own daughters. In addition their beadwork is imbued with complex mathematical systems of geometry and construction. If, as the literature recounts, the traditional beadwork has hidden codes, meaning and symbolism, then this is partly what has assisted these vulnerable women to become aware of a virus which is slowly killing thousands in their communities.

The *Siyazama* project has been charged, by many, with being responsible for the revival of the beaded cloth doll making practice in rural KwaZulu-Natal (Guille 2005; Labelle 2005; White 2006; Venter 2005). In 1971 Schoeman expressed a fear that "contact with Western-type cultures and consequent change of values, the further development of the beadwork symbol-system is in danger of being cut short, thus leading to the extinction of a unique art form and socio-cultural device" (1971:52). In light of this current study, Schoeman's fear appears to be groundless. As he was writing about the Zulu who possibly were "in the process of developing a social language" this thesis argues that the *Siyazama* project dolls are indeed a unique social language of their own.

They are an example of a transformatory collaboration between historical and contemporary practice, deeply rooted in ancient fertility rites and symbolism, embedded with hidden codes and meaning. Through their construction, they have allowed women to voice their concerns about a range of issues that are of a deep concern to themselves and their neighbours in the KwaZulu-Natal rural communities.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. Isaiah Shembe, prophet and founder of the faith-based Shembe Church (also called Church of the Nazareth) named a sacred site (north of Durban, near Inanda) called *Ekuphakameni*, the 'Place of Spiritual Upliftment'. This is also where most of the holiest shrines are to be found, and according to the literature Shembe erected most of these shrines himself. A major festival is held in mid-January every year at an equally sacred mountain location called *Nhlangakazi* which is approximately 30kms north of *Ekuphakameni*. Conducting the worship from the top of the mountain and praising the Almighty, the Zulu barefoot worshippers, clad in traditional dress and Shembe beadwork, dance and pray, reflecting an alternative ritualistic version to Christianity which has evolved out of the Old rather than the New Testament.

The Shembe beadwork style is highly recognizable and makes use of muted, transparent and luminous glass bead colours (purples, greens, blues) and bright opaque glass bead colours (white, pink) often displaying creative geometry in design. Used on hats, arms and legs this beadwork readily distinguishes believers from non-believers. Shembe strictly dictate that church members are forbidden to use condoms and that abstinence is the answer to HIV/AIDS infection. Claiming that behaviour must be moral at all times, the Church advocates that men should pay *lobola* (bride price) after sleeping with a woman, that virginity testing is an appropriate methodology for keeping women pure and being AIDS infected is seen as an 'embarrassment'.

Source: 'The Shembe's Rise to the Lord' written by Themba Nyathikazi –
(accessed 25/5/2005 and 11/9/2006) at
<http://www.durban.gov.za/eThekwini>

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

“Behaviour must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour – or more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation.” Geertz (1976:19)

INTRODUCTION

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter is divided into three distinct sections. It initially focuses on the theoretical frameworks used to guide the processes employed in the *Siyazama* intervention, and then attempts to explain the theoretical linkage between art and anthropology. Following on from this is a detailed account of the specific methodologies used to source and record the data upon which this thesis is based. This section represents an attempt to illustrate the methods used when working with the rural craftswomen and how knowledge was both built and presented. The section concludes with a reflective discussion on the role and positions which I adopted for the purposes of the study, and how these roles, at times, changed and adapted according to the various contexts and consequences of the intervention. As an epistemological emic construct¹, the study seeks to demonstrate how it was always my intention to recount the women's 'voices', both verbal and three dimensional, and to present their stories in their own words.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In attempting to develop an appropriate model to guide the study, human-centered developmental, cultural and feminist theories were interrogated and drawn upon. I deemed this to be necessary due to the pragmatic and multi-disciplinary nature of my study.

There is a general concurrence amongst most developmental researchers that rural women in South Africa continue to play subservient roles in their patriarchally ordered homesteads, villages and communities (Serote, Mager and Budlender 2001; Barker 2003). Paradoxically, and in the case of the *Siyazama* producers, they are often the only breadwinner in the family due to their beadwork activities; yet they also have the full-time job of care-giver and homemaker. To this end theorists argue that for development to truly benefit rural women, the power relations in the development process must be critically examined. Serote et al (2001:157) claim that “a gendered approach to development hinges on an understanding of power relations. Key is the belief that if development strategies are to make a difference to individual lives, and to women’s lives in particular, they need to take into account the ways in which power relations are gendered. This means that development strategies need to address the gender power relations operating in the households, other institutions, different spheres of government, and society as a whole.”

Serote (2001:155) makes the point that “to date there was, and is, no single feminist theory which talks of development ... and consequently gender practitioners in South Africa, as elsewhere, very often draw on more than one approach.” Whilst the *Siyazama* Project’s principal overarching aim has been to prevent rural traditional craftswomen from KwaZulu-Natal from becoming HIV infected, this particular research process has brought about a significant awareness of the complex positions of men and women in rural situations.

Although South Africa, in 2006, defines itself as a non-racial and non-sexist society, the government has nonetheless conceded that rural women are disadvantaged by both patriarchal and traditional controls. Regional political tensions, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, are preventing the government from dismantling this institutional patriarchal system. Walker (as cited in Serote 2001:169) sets out the contradiction starkly “in short, the South African Government has failed rural women: gender must be integrated into transformation strategies and ‘tradition’ is not gender neutral.” She believes that for a women’s movement to represent rural women, its starting point must

be to adopt a concept of tradition as dynamic and constantly changing, and an understanding that tradition is never pure or pristine, but complex and malleable. She goes on to suggest that African societies have a responsibility for the well-being of all members of society, now as much as in the past. The critical issue according to Walker (2001:171) is "to examine exactly what well-being means in a gendered way, to women and men in different contexts at specific moments."

Since the 1960s, interest in developmental micro-processes within social reality has come a long way and approaches such as social phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology, as well as reflexive, humanistic, dialectic, and existential societies have gained increasing momentum. These approaches are all characterized by a focus on the micro-processes composing social reality; a micro-foundation for development thinking. They all emphasize what people do, say and think in the actual everyday sequence of events and experiences; thereby dealing with the interactions and expressions of meaning underlying the macro-appearance of social reality (Coetzee 2001).

Roxborough (as cited in Coetzee 2001) defines development as traditionally an increase in ability to control transformation of the social structure. This theory assumes that it is possible to move from a situation of restriction or dependency to one of self-sufficiency. Yet Coetzee (2001:120) maintains that contemporary development literature indicates that this traditional approach has not produced significant insight into processes of change. Its major shortcoming is that it does not deal adequately with the deeper dimensions of underdevelopment. From this perspective, I believe that development efforts should attempt to be based on the assumption that all people value respect and wish to be treated as worthy individuals.

To this end Chambers (as cited in Coetzee 2001) notes that the lexicon of development terms has been extended to include several new focused concepts; the most applicable for this study are as follows: accountability, democracy, deprivation, diversity, empowerment, environment, gender,

globalization, human rights, life-world, livelihood, market, meaning, ownership, participation, partnership, pluralism, process, stakeholder, sustainability, transparency, vulnerability, well-being.

However, Coetzee (2001) believes that if the ultimate goal of development is well-being, it follows that the only way in which self-reliant, endogenous development can be attained is to work with the assumption that the beneficiaries of development will also have to be its contributors. He further claims that the micro-sociological perspective takes cognizance of the only observable reality in the constitution of social reality. I have found Coetzee's ideas useful when examining the experiences of women. The following diagram is an attempt by Coetzee (2001) to illustrate the various dimensions of the developmental process.

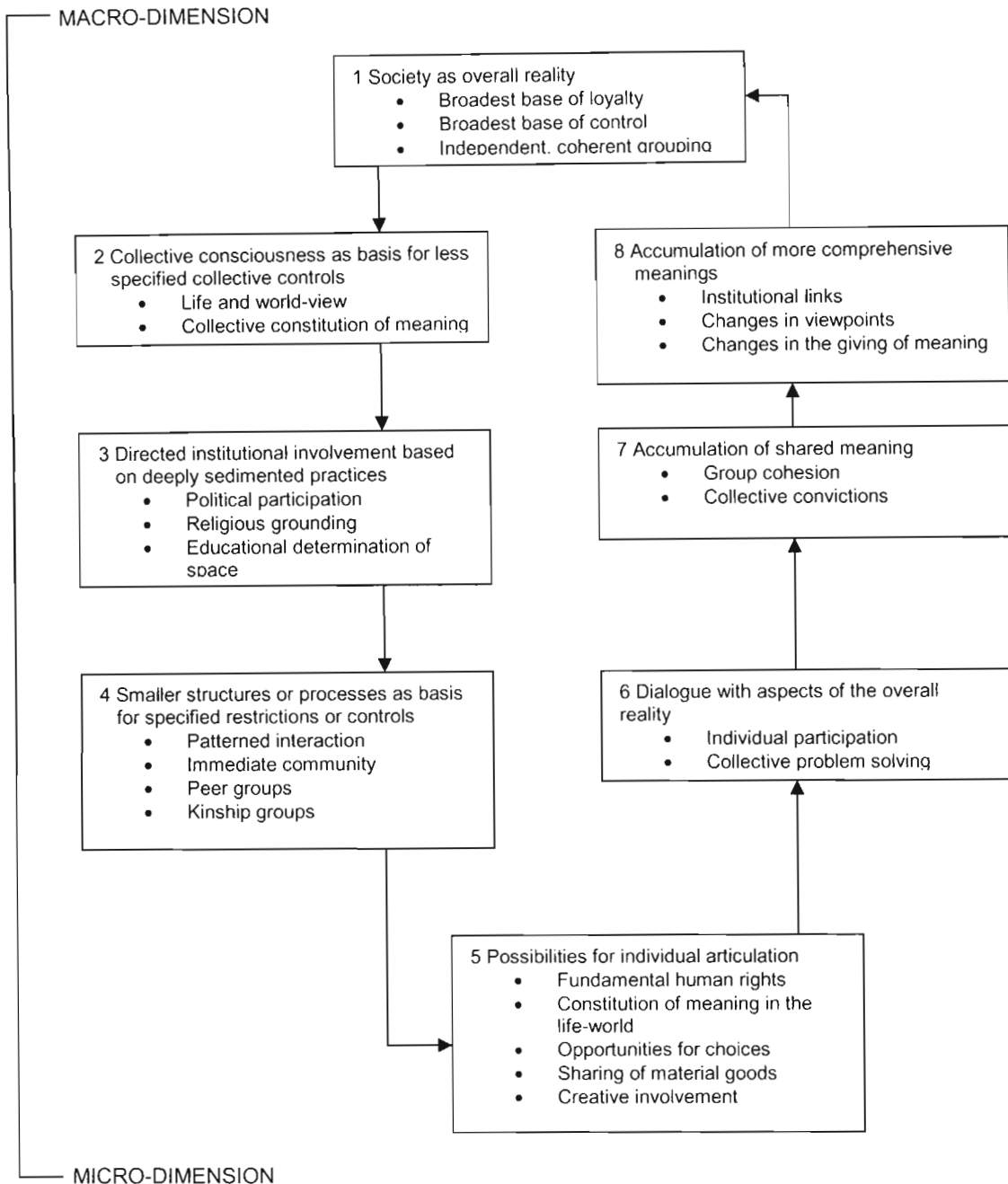


Figure 3 Dimensions for development: micro-foundations for macro-process

Ref: Coetzee J. (2001:136) *Development Theory, Policy, and Practice: A micro-foundation for development thinking*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press

In development “restoration of meaning as a reaction to an experience of meaninglessness starts on the micro-level. Such restoration of meaning can lead to movement (as seen in Figure 3 above) with accompanying momentum when it is propagated by significant groups.” (Coetzee 2001:137).

Graaff (2001:184) made three significant points when trying to make sense of the impasse experienced by development theories to date in his text *Reconsidering Theory and Metatheory in Development Studies*. They were summed up as follows: firstly, micro-theoretical research will be substantially impoverished if it ignores intended or unintended macro-factors, either at the regional or national level: secondly, it can be extremely difficult to disentangle structure from action, and thirdly, relationships of power are always the product of negotiation between the parties involved. When considering that HIV/AIDS is the most serious recent health threat to reach KwaZulu-Natal, this research will support his recommendation that developmental research should focus much more on detailed and concrete micro-situations and the social relationships that bind these together. Health is a necessary requirement when considering any form of human upliftment with a long term vision in place. Good health and well-being no doubt impacts on and influences social development.

Based on an evolving theory and current research in the field of arts and health, it is posited that health and well-being may be improved through creative activities and art making can be considered to be therapeutic (White 2005). In the educational workshops of the *Siyazama* Project, the focus has been to provide a mechanism to promote and cascade health information, develop structures and channels for marketing and producing crafts, as well as to encourage and promote a culture of arts and health thinking. It has been through this process of reification and reflexivity that new knowledge has been constructed and utilised.

ART AS ANTHROPOLOGY

Antony Gormley, British anthropologist and sculptor (as cited in Schneider 2006:9) claims that his work is created to produce a place of feeling. He argues that "the whole history of man since the Enlightenment is one of control: of the world understood as an object out there, of vision requiring distance which promotes knowledge." He suggests parallels with Alfred Gell's (1998) theoretical thinking on the discussion of the efficacy of artworks, and

his work has much to offer anthropology practice in terms of understanding the image and its effects. Gormley's famous 'Angel of the North' sculpture in Gateshead, England, is well known for its overarching and imposing presence which does not fail to evoke feelings, both loving and loathing, from the viewer. It is an excellent example of Schneider's "crossing borders" (2006:2) theme which has led to the development of new practices that draw on both disciplines.

Gormely writes that his greatest thrill, once the 'Angel of the North' was completed, was to see how quickly the image was appropriated, and how many made much meaning of this sculpture. Alfred Gell (1998) proposes that this type of work, as a way of inciting thought, embodies thinking as a theoretical basis for an anthropological engagement with art. In a critique by Bowden (2004) on Gell's art and agency theory, he asserts that Gell described this theory as 'indexes' (i.e. artworks) that 'motivate' (i.e. prompt) 'patients' (i.e. viewers) to make abductions (i.e. inferences) about 'social agency' a term Gell coined, and is well known for. Bowden (2004:2) asserts that, according to Gell, any social context in which an artwork mediates social agency constitutes an 'art nexus', and within each nexus four explanations need to be distinguished. These can be classified as the following:

1. The 'index': the artwork (or other material entity) which 'motivate/s abductive inferences, cognitive interpretations, etc.'
2. The 'artist'; the person (or other intentional being, such as a divinity) to whom is 'ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index'
3. The patient or 'recipient': 'those in relation to whom, by abduction, indexes are considered to exert agency, or who exert agency via the index', and
4. The 'prototypes': 'entities held, by abduction, to be represented in the index, often by virtue of visual resemblance, but not necessarily.'

It is this methodology which Gell makes use of “to express the way in which the different terms in an art nexus can exercise greater or lesser agency according to context.” (Bowden 2004:2)

Gell’s contribution to anthropology has relevance to this current study, and his theory of visual art that focuses on the social context of art production, circulation and reception, can be identified through the work of the rural women in the *Siyazama* Project. As an anthropological theory, and extracted from a description of his ground breaking work *Art and Agency* (1998) within the nexus of social relations involving works of art, his work suggests that in certain contexts, art objects substitute for persons and thus mediate social agency.

Another methodological approach that was drawn upon for the purposes of this current study was that of Kuchler (2006). Kuchler (2006:86) believes that it is thanks to Gell’s work that we can no longer “bypass the cognitive purchase of artefactual form as a problem to be dealt with by the tools of symbolic anthropology, but must see it as an incremental part of the process of objectification.” Further to this she suggests that his work can be classified as a theory of art which “considers art objects as persons and in line with the ‘proptotypical’ anthropological theory, as a series of problems to do with ostensibly peculiar relationships between persons and ‘things’ which somehow ‘appear as’ or do duty as, persons.” (2006:86)

METHODOLOGY

The ethnographic analysis in this study focused on the accumulated data and instruments used to document the responses, verbal and visual, of the rural women who participated in the *Siyazama* Project. Acknowledging what Geertz (1973:6) famously described as “thick descriptions” of “the multiplicity of complex conceptual structures”, an attempt was made to provide for both descriptive and interpretive data; descriptive, because detail is so crucial, and interpretive, because the researcher must determine the significance of what one observes without gathering broad, statistical information. When Geertz

discussed work by Gilbert Ryle, he noted: "Analysis is sorting out the structures of signification – what Ryle called established codes and determining their social ground and import." (cited in Geertz 1973:6). The theoretical explanation of ethnography, as indicated by Barker (2003:25) is an empirical and theoretical approach inherited from anthropology that seeks detailed holistic description and analysis of "lived experience" culture based on intensive fieldwork.

The process that launched the *Siyazama* Project began with a series of workshops which dealt with information on HIV/AIDS, educational awareness and how to avoid becoming infected. This was undertaken in 1999 by a team of environmental health workers from the Durban City Environmental Health Department, who had been trained, in turn, by the National Association of People Living with AIDS (NAPWA) through the AIDS Training and Information Centre (ATIC).

Prior to this launch, in April 1999, I had attended a design programme titled: 'Artists in Development and Creativity Workshop' in Kampala, Uganda. Following on from my discussions in Uganda I came back with the firm opinion that the *Siyazama* workshops would always include dance, drama and music. This cross-disciplinary approach, according to my Ugandan informants, had been formally applied into the Ugandan AIDS interventionist strategies and most felt it had worked and had benefited people in talking openly about their illness. Bangladesh has used similar means of assisting in their AIDS instruction. Based on this, a group called Kuyasa Devoted Artists from Durban was commissioned to perform at each workshop.

The environmental health team opened their AIDS instructional programme with the phrase 'do not be offended by frankness'. In this initial 'breaking of the silence' programme discussions centered around the immediate rural environments with issues such as pollution, unsafe water disposal and the mitigation of water transmitted disease such as the diarrhoea-type diseases like cholera. The immediate response to this was the voicing of the fear the women had in the preparation of dead bodies for burial. They all appeared

worried at this point and loudly sounded their concern for this activity. They also spoke of the unwillingness or inability of the families to speak of AIDS in this context “although they knew the person had passed away from AIDS.” The wearing of rubber gloves, or the use of plastic shopping bags drawn over the hands, was suggested and this provided a tangible sense of relief.

The discussions tended to focus mainly on the role of the traditional healer *isangoma* and the herbalist *inyanga*, both highly esteemed healers in the lives of the rural women. Pricking the skin with porcupine quills and cutting with razor blades, to insert *imuthi*, a local word that roughly translates as ‘medicine’, is common practice in healing methods. For this reason the environmental health team advised the women to take their own razor blades when being treated by the *isangoma* but warned them to avoid, at all costs, the porcupine treatment. This form of prohibitive treatment could well be passaging, if not HIV, then a host of other infectious ailments which might flow between patients.

When, at the close of the first session, several of the women remarked that they were, indeed, now worried to have sex and this included with their husbands and partners, it was clear that relationship dynamics were viewed as problematic. Evidence of this did, in fact, emerge almost immediately. On her return to the subsequent *Siyazama* Project workshop two weeks later, one of the craftswomen related a very worrying story. She had confidently gone home and revealed the condoms which she had been provided with in the workshops. This had prompted an immediate and extremely angry response from her partner who reacted by throwing her down the front steps. He then pulled her, by her hair, down the road for all to see; shouting and screaming about what “a bad woman” she was. Luckily for her, this was where the violence stopped.

I was fully aware, at this very early stage in the workshops and based on this type of aggressive reaction, that further anger on the part of male partners might well be fuelled by the project. It was for the personal safety of the women that from this point onwards there was talk about being considerate,

understanding and respectful of each other. This highly respectful approach came naturally to the women who are imbued with the *hlonipha* code of behaviour, which they claimed to practise most readily and most visibly in their own rural domains. Yet in the *Siyazama* project workshops there was an easing off and a noticeably more relaxed environment. The women could voice their opinions and objections most strongly and vehemently if they wished. A strong sisterhood developed. But on returning home they took on another facade and that was of dutiful women subservient to men and respectful at all times of her elders and in-laws.

From the outset I clearly detected a hint of negativity when it came to the women discussing their menfolk and their subsequent opinions on condom use. The women claimed that their men "fiercely object to the use of condoms." None of this helped to allay the very real fears of the women.

Yet the men did not have to wait too long before they saw and felt the economic benefits of the work undertaken by the craftswomen. The craftswomen reported that their men also appeared relieved as most of the AIDS education was being taken care of. Providing AIDS education for the beadworker mothers had the added benefit of targeting the children as well.

Telephone Wire Basket Makers

In 2000 a group of telephone wire weavers, also called *imbenge* makers, joined the *Siyazama* Project HIV/AIDS educational workshops. Their names are Lungile Nene, Zodwa Mapumula, Fikile Ndlovu, Ntombifuthi Maphumulo, Sensekile Ntuli, Nomkhosi S'biya, Bonissiwe Magwaza, Zinhle Ngcobo, Zandile Nzimande, Ntombenhle Khamgo, Bongiwe Doyisa, Ngobile S'bisi, Janet Ngubane, Anna Maria Dlamini, Khehla Ngcobo, Elizabeth Zulu, Neli Ntembu, S'bongile Nkomo, Nomusa Mbokoma, Florence Maquvana, Zanele Gwala, Thulengani Ngubane, Tholiwe Nsale, Nomsan Majola and Phumalile Npele.

As a group of informal settlement dwellers all hailing from the Siyanda informal settlement, on the outskirts of Durban, they had higher entry level

knowledge of AIDS in comparison with their counterpart rural beadworkers. Subsequent visits to this area over the past few years have confirmed that, although there is wide scale poverty clearly evident, there is, in part, some small effort being employed to rectify the situation. Albeit slowly and seemingly haphazardly, there are signs that shacks are being replaced with sturdier grey airbrick structures. Nonetheless this building effort is replicating the aforementioned poverty by its very nature and is recreating large-scale poverty stricken zones. It seems unlikely that these areas will ever develop into something other than what they currently are. The roads are left neglected and there is no electricity or running water. The women here participated in four *Siyazama* Project workshops in 2000 and during this time produced a range of HIV informed *imbenge*'s, some of which are depicted in Appendix 2.

The overall aim of this study was to analyse the "lived experience" of the rural women beadworkers of the *Siyazama* Project. Through a reflective and qualitative study of women's engagement with and the impact of rural traditional craft production, I sought to determine whether a culturally familiar code of communication had been conceived, revived, modernized and transmitted effectively. The broad range of impressions and expressions imparted from the rural women and their work was studied, recorded and documented from a methodological, conceptual and contextual bias.

In accordance with the aim of this thesis, an attempt was made to describe and analyze a specific *Siyazama* Collection - amounting to almost 70 beaded artifacts - which was viewed as a three-dimensional archive that accounted for and illuminated some the current concerns and life dilemmas facing the craftswomen. This collection, which consists of beaded cloth dolls, tableaux and jewellery contextualizes and displays a current response to AIDS amongst rural craftswomen in KwaZulu-Natal. Accordingly, documentation and archival material collected from previous *Siyazama* Project programmes, since the inception, were comparatively analyzed so as to add an historical analytical dimension and time-line to this research. This analysis provided the study with an account of changing perspectives and changing positions on

behalf of the rural women who, in some cases, 'rewrote' and embellished the stories describing their artworks.

Procedures to collect and produce data included participant observation in the workshops as well as on-site visits to the rural homesteads, semi-structured focus group interviewing, one-on-one interviews and analysis of structured questionnaires. Funding was secured through the National Research Foundation (NRF) and this was used to fund transport and meetings with these women both in Durban at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) as well as in their rural homes. Each participant was also encouraged to record her own impressions of her involvement and to reflect on her craft work contribution in the project to date. Further to this they were encouraged to make meaning on the relationship between the creative intervention and the range of health information encountered.

When writing about the difference that a particular project may have made in the lives of the participants, the use of the word 'impact' in situations where there is no compelling evidence of change or that the intervention caused that change, is problematic. In the most egregious cases, one will hear claims that 'that programme really had impact', based solely on the perception that the programme was well-liked or that it reached a large audience, especially if a celebrity were associated with it. In the absence of evidence, this is mere speculation. Evaluation purists also object to claims of impact when the desired change may have occurred, but the study design can not rule out other factors that may have contributed to that change. Often the challenge of programme evaluation of any kind is the tradeoff between methodological rigour and ownership of the process by those responsible for the programme.

Prozesky (2001:537) believes that a third paradigm has developed in the methodology of the social sciences. Further to this it is added that the practice of research is not something that can be separated from theory or metatheory. They are all necessarily linked. Participatory Action Research (PAR) flows from the metatheory of critical social science. This methodology involves action/reaction and change/exchange, impression/expression, encounter and

dialectic exchange, and makes for a dramatic change from what is conventionally seen as 'proper' research in positivist terms that is, objective, impartial, and scientific and quantified. Many believe that PAR is an activity which is well suited to serve the ends to empowerment, concientization and emancipation in development. While generally agreeing with Prozesky, Jane Bertrand (Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman 2004) of the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programmes argues that participatory evaluation may not decisively and conclusively meet the methodological rigour of the scientific community to measure effectiveness.

For these reasons three types of programme evaluation techniques were implemented in the initial *Siyazama* Project evaluation, beginning with formative, then process and finally summative evaluation techniques. Formative evaluation determined who was most affected by the problem of avoiding HIV/AIDS infection and attempted to identify the needs of specific subgroups like partners, the elderly and children. It also attempted to ascertain existing indigenous knowledges, beliefs and attitudes. It attempted to determine levels of access to services, information, social support and other health and societal resources. Further to this it attempted to understand barriers to action, and finally it attempted to determine appropriate communication habits, preferences, dreams and hopes for the future. The source of data was varied. Questionnaires from previous workshops and primary data collection from the participant audience were scrutinized. Additionally, data was recorded which detailed opinions, fears, beliefs, and other key factors that impinge on the sex and HIV/AIDS interface.

Process evaluation served two important functions in the initial study. Firstly, it provided a plethora of satisfactory information, necessary to satisfy research and project evaluation as well as benefiting the participants in the study. In this case it gave the women of *Siyazama* an opportunity to voice opinions, to reflect and to discuss issues pertinent to their lives as well as to the study. In other words it enabled the women to feel confident that the programme was progressing as well as expected. Secondly, this process evaluation provided important documentation of what activities took place in the lifetime of the

project. With this in mind an attempt was made to gauge opinions on quality of service delivery, access, and reach as the women had all been involved in a previous research undertaking in *Siyazama* which had been conducted in terms of the 'multiplier effect', a term coined and espoused by developmental specialists. To explain this further, an attempt was made to train craftswomen from another region in KwaZulu-Natal in the same beadwork genre (beaded cloth doll making) and to 'grow' the participant groups. This challenge created much debate amongst the *Siyazama* women and will be discussed in more detail in the context of this current study.

Finally, the summative evaluation component measured the extent to which the programme made a difference in the lives of the rural women. Research for this thesis was an attempt to fill in the detail of that difference and describe some particularities of the art and anthropology interface of the *Siyazama* Project.

MY ROLE

Anthropologists, including Moore (1996), argue that attention must be paid to ensure, when discussing situated knowledges, that one must be careful not to slip too easily into an unthought-of dialectic of opposition which is the negativity of difference. Both Moore and Mudimbe (1996) warn that the failing of anthropology is that it begins by measuring the distance from the same to the other, and what must be avoided is any tendency to construct African knowledge(s) as simple reversals of Euro-American ones. Indigenization of knowledge(s), while potentially powerfully creative for individuals and collectivities within specific contexts runs the risk of defining certain kinds of knowledge as absolutely local, without comparative scope or wider application. Therefore Richards (as cited in Moore, 1996:6) claims that it is imperative that anthropology should recognize that local knowledge, including local technical knowledge, can be part of a set of knowledges properly pertaining to political economy and the social sciences, and can be comparative in scope, as well as international in outlook. Moore claims that

“we are now no longer looking for ontological categories, but for interwoven patterns; what was once systematic is now mobile” (1996:9)

Throughout my study I have been mindful of these critical perspectives, and I have attempted to maintain a largely emic epistemological construct¹ in the quest to get to the nature of the range of problems affecting, and of concern to, the rural craftswomen. The validation of this emic knowledge as a cultural characteristic of the rural women was claimed through a close and lengthy relationship which spanned more than a decade. I have empathetically and intuitively persevered and probed to seek to understand more about their lives, their lifestyles and their expert beadwork abilities.

My engagement in the rural craft sector has involved ethnographic fieldwork not only in rural KwaZulu-Natal but also some research in rural Uganda. As a design and product development facilitator, my role in *Siyazama* was to look at new and alternative methods of creating and constructing art forms. An additional role was to ensure that the rural women acquired knowledge on HI/AIDS. However, I also fully understood that the resultant craft products must be both saleable and marketable, whilst fitting into the world scheme of being novel, inventive, contemporary and desirable.

Recognizing early on in my work that a new way of learning, informing, impressing and expressing would have to be employed to make a substantial imprint, I used my facilitative role to embody a creative environment within which the rural women could feel supportive and creative. To further explain this, and with regard to my concern about the colonial aspects of interference and interventionism (Wells 2000), I tended to relinquish my leadership position and attempted to devolve this by approaching new learning techniques through a visual communicational holistic prototype. This approach translated into a colourful and welcoming space imbued with caring and empathy. Glass beads, fabrics and accessorizing materials were piled enticingly onto the tables. This colourful environment, in turn, fuelled creative interactionism and debate which was supported by local musicians, singers, theatrical students and dancers. Each performance, often with the notion of

AIDS at its heart, added a new and fresh dynamic to the learning experience. The walls were adorned with rich imagery of beadwork, both historical and contemporary.

The visual communication aspect was heightened by the inclusion of projected images featuring large scale pictorial slides of previous *Siyazama* events as well as images of the craft producers working in the workshops. The participants were fascinated by these images of themselves. Nutritious and healthy food, including fresh fruit and fruit juices, was always a priority. Invited guests were welcomed by all and these often included visiting professors, anthropologists, donors, design researchers, medical doctors, inyangas and staff from local marketing outlets. Although chairs were always provided many of the rural participants often opted to sit on the floor on reed mats.

Singularly important in affirming cultural identity was the regular attendance of a local Durban *isangoma* who began each of the workshop meetings with prayers to the ancestor's *amadlozi* and the burning of *imphepho* (*Helichrysum Miconiaefolium*), a dry and very aromatic plant used in divination and connection with the ancestors. She would crouch down on a reed mat on the floor, burn the small stack of *imphepho*, and chanting quietly in Zulu, would circle the full group of participants. Each participant would both inhale and blow the sweet smelling smoke. According to the renowned Zulu ethnographer Berglund (1976:114) his informants claim that "*imphepho* gives us a remembering mind. We do not easily forget. It is given to us by the shades (ancestors) so that we may not forget anything."

In all of the *Siyazama* workshops we have always included a welcoming session to the ancestors and the ritual burning of *imphepho* has taken place regularly. On more than one occasion I have been reprimanded by the women for forgetting to bring the *imphepho*, as this was, mostly, seen to be my task: I had the responsibility of securing the *imphepho* making sure we had matches available and supplying a small container for the ashes to smoulder. This was where my responsibility with *imphepho* ended. If we did not have an *isangoma*

present, one of the *Siyazama* producers would willingly perform the ritual. When the Department of Design Studies moved to new and modern facilities, this smoke also had the effect of setting off the fire alarm system.

Of interest is the debate between Bryant and Doke-Vilakazi (1949) who disagree with Berglund when they claim that burning of *imphepho* was done at most ritual celebrations. Berglund's informant suggested that "it was a mistake of the old people to burn *imphepho* in the huts. This thing must be handled by diviners." (1976:114)

The informant (1976:114) does not make it clear whether it was the huts or the lack of a diviner which was at fault, but in any case, and on reflection, I believe that this simple and powerful ritual which was carried out with much regularity in our meetings was not only highly valued by the beadworkers but it also was a major contribution to the success of our combined work together. It engendered a respectable and insightful approach to our activities and my understanding of the nearness of the living and the dead was enhanced through this process. With this ritual I became well-informed on the importance of the *amadlozi*, their intimate connectedness and their indepth knowledge of the thoughts and deeds of the living.

Through the use of a multi-layered and multi-disciplinary theoretical and methodological approach, the *Siyazama* Project was an attempt to build new epistemological constructs. The urgency of the AIDS pandemic called for a way to link the women's expert craft skills to their health needs. In the process of exploring ways to make this link, new methods, thoughts and ideas were generated. The result, as documented in this thesis, is a visual and metaphorical account of some of the most pressing contemporary issues affecting their lives and lifestyles.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. For a full account of the Emic/Etic Distinctions see Professor James Lett's Faculty WebPage at <http://faculty.ircc.edu/faculty/jlett/> (accessed 30 March and 22 June 2006)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RURAL CRAFTS INDUSTRY IN KWAZULU-NATAL

“The burden of AIDS will thus continue to be borne unevenly in South Africa. This is largely because of South Africa's high unemployment rate and the strong connection between unemployment, poverty and HIV infection.” Nicoli Nattrass (2004:13)

INTRODUCTION

Undeniably South Africa's past and present have been structured and reshaped by its repressive political regime of apartheid. This regime gave support to the migrant labour system and, whilst permeating all aspects of rural¹ lives in South Africa, it most certainly determined the profile of the country's continued institutionalized high levels of inequality and poverty. For any study dealing with rural livelihoods in South Africa, one needs to understand that rural crafts, as a marginalized industrial sector, grew out of a pervasive and racially aligned political background. This background formed the context from which the rural crafts industry, as a mostly overlooked economic sector, grew albeit slowly, and understandably, haphazardly.

Emblazoned on a panel in the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg (Site visit November 2004) is the following statement ‘A growing awareness that civil and political rights are of little value to those living in extreme poverty led to a recognition of socio-economic rights in South Africa's constitution’. Under the African National Congress's new leadership in South Africa in 1994, and within the present Mbeki government, rural craft enterprise has been recognized as a highly desirable method of self-employment in the informal

sector. One of the government's key objectives is to preserve traditional skills, and craft production is the mode from which this can be translated. The making of crafts has the potential to generate an income where none was possible before.

The World Factbook (2005) pins the unemployment rate in South Africa at 25.2%. This statistic does not reflect the numbers nor the plight of the underemployed. Yet with the understanding that craft making can contribute to a better lifestyle for rural people well entrenched in their mandate, the South African government has, nonetheless, left most of the developmental work to private agencies, NGOs and erratic donor organizations. In KwaZulu-Natal the National Crafts Council of South Africa mobilized its members between 1996 and 1999 to engage in reaching as many rural craftspeople as possible in an attempt to collate statistical information which detailed contact details and respective craft genres. As a member of the Crafts Council in KwaZulu-Natal I was involved in this research undertaking. This information also demonstrated the vast traditional craft skill resources which lay hidden in rural KwaZulu-Natal and showed how the province, by a large measure, was unequalled in traditional craft practices and traditional lifestyles.

This activity was part of a government initiative undertaken in 1998 through the then known as South African Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), now the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), to research the cultural industries and to make recommendations for their growth and development². This initiative led to opening up information channels between the craftspeople and the market place in Durban³. All of this activity resulted in providing a platform from which to design marketing and advocacy strategies which would lead to benefiting the rural craftspeople of the province. What became clear was that the majority of the craftspeople lacked formal education; this, coupled with both low and non-existent levels of literacy left them mostly excluded from the formal economy. Furthermore, and most importantly, this activity revealed the broad extent of the levels of creative expertise and craft skill which pervade the province, and as such

showed that the inherent craft and design ability had the potential to generate livelihoods amongst marginalized societies.

In the study, 'The South African Craft Industry Report' (1998:3) it is claimed that "Women entrepreneurs, especially black women have limited access to capital, technology and resources therefore craft activity often seems their only real opportunity for income generation. Furthermore, craft businesses are often built around traditional women's skills, for example sewing, braiding and beading. This means that women often had the baseline skills for production and that they could adapt these skills to generate income, instead of having to learn totally new skills. The flexible and often home based nature of craft production means that women can integrate their economic activities with household duties."

This study also highlighted the range of constraints which impede rural craft production and effective enterprise. A more recent study⁴ conducted by Kate Philip, CEO of the Mineworkers Development Agency, highlighted the range and level of impediments experienced by rural craftspeople and listed these as in the diagram below. Most notable is the absence of the terms 'health' and 'well-being' under the Producers segment as health and well-being are most certainly, in my opinion, key factors in any organization or enterprise which hopes to succeed.

The following diagram is an attempt by Phillip (2002) to illustrate the various barriers that impede entrepreneurial success among rural producers.

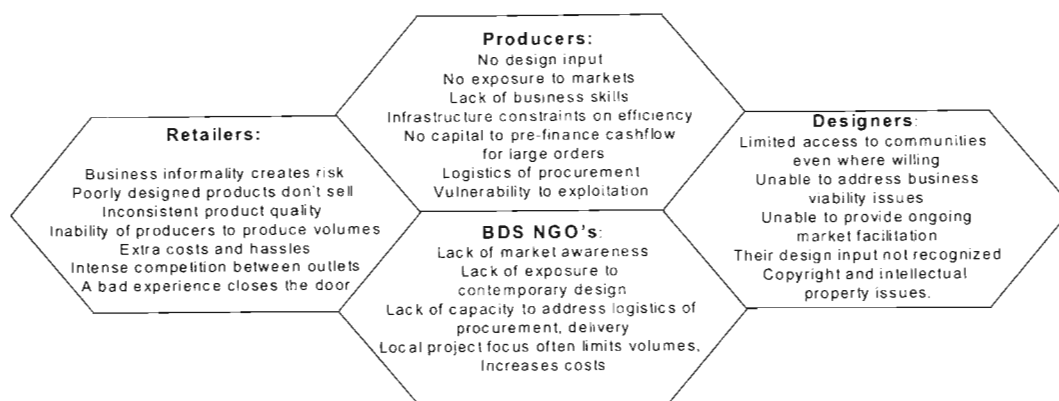


Figure 4: Barriers limiting the access of Rural Producers to High Value Markets

Ref: Philip, K. (2002:12) *The Quest for Rural Enterprise Support Strategies that Work: A Case Study of Mineworkers Development Agency*

Current research has shown the rural craft situation in KwaZulu-Natal to be lacking both a culture of production and diversity, and furthermore most claim that the rural populace is consumer driven rather than producer-driven (Guille 2005; Philip 2002:4). Often reliant on income from migrant wage earners, government grants and pensions, rural economies quite naturally flounder when faced with retrenchment and death. Even today, the few studies that have attempted to analyze this developing sector, have made little headway in estimating the exact numbers of people involved, let alone estimating their combined craft production output accurately⁵. This industry continues to remain unfathomable and indefinable. The confusion has in effect disenfranchised the province's craftspeople, most of whom are female.

For rural women, their engagement as craftspeople is often their only form of personal income and control. Whilst the production of crafts forms a valuable source of income, in rural regions disempowered by large scale impoverishment, this situation has been known to create further gender disparities which, in turn, has led to lack of disclosure of income to

unemployed male household members (Wells 2000). According to my female informants this situation is “dangerous, but there is no other way” and unfortunately it also further perpetuates the entrenched male/female disparities in the Zulu culture.

Infrequent and periodical initiatives and projects, some of a high caliber international stature, have aimed to alleviate the plight of craftspeople in the province but few projects have survived beyond the ending of the donor funds (Guille 2005). Worsening this scenario is the fact that most marketing outlets and players in the field of dispersing rural crafts do not communicate with each other. There is no evidence, to my mind, of a combined and co-ordinated effort to link objectives, streamline and focus on a market driven vision. The few marketing outlets in Durban, for example, are strictly endogenous, operating in opposition with each other and, indeed, some claim to ‘own’ their groups of craftspeople. It remains to this day an industry surrounded with high levels of discordance, competition and malevolence, coupled with a range of varying and often changing political view points. Worse still, it can be seen as a historically racially divided sector as most marketing outlets are owned by whites and the majority of craftspeople in KwaZulu-Natal are black.

When development specialists measure the success of an intervention they assess whether it has the potential to be scaled up or replicated. These factors are vital developmental indicators to the viability and long term vision of any project. Yet the majority of projects and interventions, and most especially those in rural areas, never achieve being scaled up. The reasons are many and varied. The craftswomen of *Siyazama* described a range of problems which they experience on an on-going basis. They have spoken much about their on-going difficulty to acquire the raw materials for their work, their informational isolation, their over reliance on external product and design development assistance, the lack of efficient productivity and bulk order capabilities, inconsistencies in quality and finish, outsourcing problems, costly transport costs and long distances to the market, on-going cash flow problems with no capital investment plans, no marketing awareness and no on-going

access to workshop and business incubation facilities. If the champion or project leader, for one or other reason vacates their leadership role in the project, history has shown that the result is most often a complete collapse. The dire consequence of this over reliance is the fragile economic status of the participants, resulting in their level of confidence in the industry being shattered forever.

Professor Jackie Guille (2005:4) in her UNESCO/NORAD 'Artists in Development' Programme report titled 'Key issues for the Development of the Craft and Design Sector in South Africa' makes note of important challenges for the future not only for the *Siyazama* project, but the whole rural craft sector in general. She also warns of the complex and crucial role of the facilitator or external agent in this industry: "When reflecting upon the numerous craft-based projects (in South Africa), the themes of 'authenticity', 'interference' and 'appropriation' are often uppermost. Many of the techniques employed are in no way traditional, and often design styles and craft products are born out of the benevolent intervention of an external agent - be this international volunteer or local personnel - more often than not proffering a eurocentric influence.

This poses the question of what ultimate legacy does the external agent leave behind? Too often, ventures stagnate or, worse, collapse altogether after aid is withdrawn. Many projects do not have sufficient funds or access to credit. When new opportunities arise they lack the working capital to take advantage of the situation. Even when sales are achieved, the profit generated invariably goes to support daily needs rather than being reinvested into the enterprise." Guille (2005:4) offers her opinion on how to achieve successful rural craft enterprise with "Where there are examples of success - a crucial factor has been local ownership from the outset. Prosperous ventures are dynamically bound together and created by people collaboratively using their talents. Entrepreneurial skills - giving attention to quality control in their design and production - coupled with investment in people are key factors in their success. But sustainable development cannot only be about commodity production, it must also embrace the conditions in which people live,

conditions that define and create communities and embody all the tensions which we live with in the world today.

In particular she talks of three specific issues which are relevant to the *Siyazama* Project:

- Ownership and intervention: the creative ideas embedded in the products are owned by the makers but their ability to initiate new developments, create opportunities, explore new markets and take responsibility for their success (or failure) appears to rise with external intervention ... and fall back ... until the next intervention. Almost all makers spoke of 'drought' periods between workshops (Wells 2000:60), pointing to a developing reliance on the workshops to indirectly or directly provide the impetus for product development and access to earnings. When will it be possible to cease the workshops, would the makers sink or swim?
- Evaluation of the period between and beyond workshops: identifying the recurring factors that cause a loss of momentum and the factors that separate the successful from those that 'mark-time' until the next workshop.
- The makers play little or no part in the physical presentation / display and marketing of their works and thus gain no direct feedback from the end purchasers. Clearly, the rural location of many of the makers prohibits the women from marketing their own products to the wider marketplace but perhaps the workshops could be incorporated into a marketing strategy as 'events' with which the client market may engage as audience and purchaser.

Guille (2005:4) makes the notable point that "these interventions may be inevitable but nonetheless provide only temporary and transitory support."

Nonetheless, there have been changes over time in the rural crafts industry, and these have been notably in the field of professionalism and design

aesthetics, and particularly on behalf of the producers themselves⁶. According to Anthea Martin the African Arts Centre in Durban was initially the only outlet for rural crafts in Durban up until seven years ago, but now there are “many more outlets and many more orders for crafts” (personal communication 11 April 2006). She believes that a degree of professionalism has pervaded the industry. Qualifying this statement she sees that there is far more sophistication in product development and design than ever before. This factor, she reported, is in part due to the range of developmental workshops which have involved the craftspeople over the past years. Furthermore there is more emphasis placed on realistic pricing which tends to, in most cases but not all, guard against exploitation. Within this new scenario where demand can sometimes exceed production and delivery, an innovative approach has emerged out of necessity. With some of the craftspeople tending to ‘outsource’ their orders to others, the resultant artifacts often lack the ‘signature’ of the originator. Quality has suffered noticeably as demand has increased, and with this expansion, heightened pressure has impacted on the producers.

Moreover, on this point Martin reported on the lack of success of their annual Artist of the Year award, which aimed to support a single artist with a monthly cash stipend for a year. The expectation of this award is that, through encouragement and financial backing, the artist focuses and prepares over the year for a one-man exhibition of work. To date this award has proved problematic with varying degrees of noncompliance. Although only male artists have been recipients to date, the results of this award have not been entirely satisfactory. In one case the award led to a complete shutdown of communication between the artist and the centre. The artist was ‘discovered’ by an international gallery owner and was requested to supply only them with his art. He subsequently ‘disappeared’ off the local art scene.

A further case in point, worth noting within the context of this study, occurred when the artist recipient, a well-known sculptor, no longer continued his practice as an artist at all. Instead his new role became that of tutor, dealer and instructor. Through training others to assist with his artwork productions

he had re-invented himself. Unfortunately he no longer practices his unique and special artistic ability and one can only wonder if the monthly income, through the centre, changed his opinion. More possibly, his new and elevated status as a dealer brought him more respect, and by all accounts, the new job could well involve less physical and manual work. In other words he could now be recognized as being 'a professional' rather than just an artist; which may be regarded as being an inferior position.

Although there are no easy answers to this situation it has undeniably much to do with poverty, morality and competing value systems. Whilst it is unacceptable, in an ethical sense, to pass off other artists' or crafters' work as one's own, in a situation of demand and great poverty it is entirely understandable that this occurrence may be on the increase. Key artistic modalities like signature, reputation, prestige and recognition seemingly have little bearing when people are surrounded by large scale deprivation⁷.

When questioned on the impact of deaths due to AIDS of rural crafts producers and the subsequent impact on the industry, most marketing outlets that were interviewed for this study responded that there was "no effect" at all. They stated that "there are plenty of them (artists/craftspeople)." The main concerns for the marketing outlets were with outsourcing, quality and meeting orders. Nonetheless many noteworthy and expert craftspeople have died at a young age over the past few years, and Martin points out that "they are still not admitting to the real reason for death" although the reason "seems to come out eventually." (Personal communication 11 April 2006)

The *Siyazama* Project workshops were directly aimed at demystifying myths and promoting openness around the AIDS condition. Yet in Martin's opinion, "nothing has changed" since the beginning of the project's workshops. At the African Art Centre it appears that buyers, in 2006, rarely ask for an art or craft piece that has an AIDS depiction and Martin supports this view with the claim that "people have had enough of AIDS."

The success of *Siyazama* bears testimony to the fact that the opposite opinion exists with a host of international art and craft buyers. To this end the extent of international university, museum and gallery interest in the crafts of the *Siyazama* project producers is broad and seemingly unrelenting. This interest gives credence to the varying and important roles of all outlets and all players in the field of rural crafts, and how the gap that exists in linking these sectors presents a serious challenge to all. This challenge can, at times, appear insurmountable to women such as those of the *Siyazama* Project. The environment within which most rural craftswomen live is lacking in reliable HIV/AIDS information; has few, if any health workers making visits; fuels growing concern for their and their children's safety (i.e. fear of AIDS infection); supports poverty stricken lifestyles with too many dependents and dependencies (orphans affected or infected by HIV/AIDS); promotes 'survival' on shrinking incomes with rising unemployment; increases the likelihood of poor health⁸ and promotes high levels of stress among family members. The long distances and costs of travel between rural areas and Durban to sell their crafts, and the few marketing outlets in Durban, who are in turn reliant on fickle tourist tastes, all help to add to the misery of their lives.

Beadwork is an industry which has always been dominated by women. Experience of this has shown to raise questions about long term sustainability caused by the often dilapidated home environment where they work, the expectation of women as care-givers, and the immediate threat of large scale illness due to AIDS related illnesses. Today these craftswomen are doubly challenged not only to provide the sole income for their families but also according to Leclerc-Madlala (2005:36) to perform the prime role for which they are heralded as "leaders in the AIDS holocaust" but are "left carrying the can."

Notwithstanding the challenges, their eternal hope remains intact as they yearn for markets closer to home to sell their work. This, they offer, would help them to spend more time at home working on their crafts and caring for others while spending less time traveling.

Concurring with the work of Leclerc-Madlala (2005) in her text *Reflections on Women's Leadership in the Context of Second Phase HIV/AIDS* (2005) this thesis has attempted to reveal the extent to which rural craftswomen are suffering, not only with regard to the South African government's dismissive approach to AIDS⁹ but also within the discordant and erratic rural craft industry. There is a degree of similarity between the health and craft industry sectors which tends to prevail in many parts of current South African society. Overall this approach leads to a lack of compulsion and a great silence. Leclerc-Madlala (2005:33) expresses the opinion that "the HIV/AIDS pandemic has given African women a visibility like little else has before." She also describes how the entire AIDS industry is "shifting its focus from youth to older women." This author also believes that taking into account all of the issues which are negatively impacting the lives of these women it appears shameful of the government and other donor organizations to declare these women as "leaders" in the face of AIDS. As care-givers, mothers, and craftswomen, they are already embattled, and weary.

What Leclerc-Madlala (2005:33) terms this "visibility" factor has been at the forefront of the *Siyazama* project activities from the very beginning. On reflection, this stance has accorded the craftswomen some economic success, international recognition, and status but as this thesis will show has been unable to help them in avoiding becoming HIV infected. Yet by making their voices heard and showcasing their artworks as evidence, the project has used the "visibility" factor to highlight the suppressed, stifled, and quelled anxieties which are common-place to all rural women, and most especially married women, in KwaZulu-Natal.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

1. According to The World Factbook a total of 46% of South African citizens live in the non-urban rural areas, and research has shown that they do not always have the same access to medical facilities as their urban counterparts. (www.cia.gov/cia/publications. Last accessed 16 April 2006)

A recent study by de Vreis (2003) claims that in some rural areas in the Eastern Cape the doctor:patient ratio is 1:30,000.

2. This research report is an extensive survey of the craft sector in South Africa and is available to view at www.dacst.gov.za (last accessed 10 May 2006)
3. For more information on this particular aspect and the work of the Crafts Council of South Africa (KZN branch) during the 1996-1999 period see Wells, '*Imibiko Yokufa Nokuphia*' (unpublished MA dissertation) Middlesex University, UK (2000:29-31)
4. For further contextualizing information on the situation impacting rural craft enterprise in South Africa see 'The quest for Rural Enterprise Support Strategies that work: A Case Study of Mineworkers Development Agency', Kate Philip CEO, Mineworkers Development Agency, South Africa (2003:12-13)
5. For an example of this inaccuracy, an early study with statistical estimations which was conducted in the late 1990s by Wesgro was retracted once it was declared that the method of extrapolation had been incorrect. This study incorrectly estimated that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated by the craft sector was 1.5% which made it, in 1999, the fastest growing sector in South Africa. (Dr W. Thomas, Wesgro, personal communication August 1999)
6. With the increase in orders it seems that the artists and craftspeople may not be doing their own work. They tend to pay others a pittance (subcontracting) for their input and then claim the work as their own, and demand a high price in return. This is known as the master craftspeople approach. Once they become 'famous' their prices increase following demand. The inability to meet demand makes for a subcontracting culture. Marketers are unhappy about the low quality (personal communication A. Martin 26 May 2005)

On the Statistics South Africa website the rate of growth for the South African population has been declining steadily between 2001 and 2005. While the growth rate for the white population has been negative during this period, for the other population groups, the growth rates have declined. Africans have experienced the greatest decline over this period and this amounts to an approximate 0, 08% decline per year. The overall growth rate for 2004 and 2005 is estimated at 0.92% with the rate for females slightly lower than that for males. The current (2006) predictions for life expectancy at birth stand at for males 43.25% and for females 42.19% (www.stassa.org Last accessed 15 April 2006)

7. Professor Nicoli Nattrass of the University of Cape Town expressed her opinion on the extent of large scale deprivation in rural South Africa at the 2nd South African AIDS Conference held in Durban in June 2005. For further discussion on 'active job-shedding' and the 'gap between the employed and the unemployed' see her book *The Moral Economy of AIDS in South Africa* (2004:12-40)
8. For a discussion on popular responses to AIDS and the history of how it has impacted South African society see *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2005(31)4 article by S. Leclerc-Madlala 'Popular Responses to HIV/AIDS and Policy'.
9. See also article in *Agenda* (2005) by S. Leclerc-Madlala titled 'Reflections on Women's Leadership in the Context of Second Phase HIV/AIDS'.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WOMEN OF SIYAZAMA

"In bead-cloth sculpture, women have combined traditional bead craft skills with cloth and a variety of other materials, in a way which has enabled them to illustrate, as a painter might, a vision of their lives and the things they see around them. They have begun to reflect on their lives, and express their reflections and observations. In universal terms this is surely a prerequisite of art."

Thorpe (1994:72)



Figure 5: Lobolile Ximba at her rural home near Muden, Msinga.

INTRODUCTION

Axel-Ivar Berglund, anthropologist and missionary in Zululand, published his PhD thesis titled *Zulu Thought-patterns and Symbolism* in 1975 and I believe this seminal work created a flurry of interest in local intellectual circles. Since then, there has been an abundance of research investigations carried out attempting to explain and document numerous aspects of Zulu ways of thinking and behaving. There is no doubt that his extensive fieldwork and varied interactions within Zulu society fueled academic interest to take a closer look at this specific society. On attending a seminar he conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the *Zulu Heaven-Herds*, in 2002¹, I was taken aback by the ease, honesty and intense interest with which he spoke about the 'other'. He transformed my thinking as he spoke, by giving recognition to a nation bursting with enviable amounts of rich cosmology, with mystery and intrigue, the fantastical side of human nature and, most especially, he spoke about the tools he used for making meaningful insight within this world: one which exists alongside my own. His advice was, as I recall, to apply a keen awareness to the importance of detail in ethnographic studies and to try to understand people from their own points of departure.

Like most non-western societies the Zulu perceives illness in a different manner to the narrow western biomedical idea of illness. According to Berglund the Zulu do not view the finality of death as the end of life. Rather immediately after death, the spirits of the ancestors take an active and curious interest in the lives of the living. The ancestors are believed to be paying attention to everything concerning the day to day activities and thoughts of the living. They also expect a continual degree of interaction and acknowledgement from the living. This conviction implies a softening of the division line between life and death, which subsequently makes death an event of lesser effect than is the case in western societies (1975).

Many anthropological studies of African societies, including Berglund's own work, have shown how moral values and qualities express realities, and that

symbols, metaphors and rituals are meaningful to members of the society in which they are found. This is an important statement yet one that is open to violation by well meaning researchers and anthropologists. The possibility of misinterpretation or incorrect deciphering when studying 'the other' is always a risk in all of this work. Language barriers, Western biases, contemporary values, servile tendencies and gender discriminatory interactions where women feel and act inferior, as well as a host of mediatory practices could all play some role in skewing information. In KwaZulu-Natal there is much anthropological and historical evidence that shows how the crafts of the Zulu have been recorded, admired and showcased, often in galleries and museums nationally and abroad. And in most cases, if not all, the craftwork is totally inaccessible to the craft producers themselves. Undoubtedly through these exhibitions one has been allowed a mediated and regrettably often one directional worldview of 'the other'.

Schneider (2006) argues that some of these encounters between art and cultural others have left a substantial legacy, which might continue to cast a shadow on contemporary craft, what he refers to as border-crossings. To understand this view one needs to take a look at the work of the renowned 20th artist, Pablo Picasso. Picasso could be labeled guilty of this so called border-crossing which Schneider discusses, as it was he, who never placed a foot on the continent of Africa. He gave birth to the cubism movement that originated from his exposure to masks and sculpture from Africa. The difference is that the artifacts were exhibited in museums and galleries in Paris, which was never the creator's original intention. Rather, according to Andrew (1995), they were created to perform a functional role in the life of the community within which they were made. The roles included ritual, celebration, story-telling, village entertainment and role-play. Although little of this functional, yet mysterious role was fully understandable to western society, there was no doubt as to the intense attraction of these artifacts. Both artists and anthropologists were inspired by the otherness they saw embedded within these works. Felix-Pegannon (2006:10), the Ambassador of France in South Africa, who writes in the Picasso and Africa exhibition catalogue of one of the most important exhibitions of Picasso's work to be

exhibited in South Africa to date, that this collection of work “illustrates that culture is always an exchange, that there cannot be culture without dialogue and that there cannot be creation without encounters with otherness.” Simply put, Picasso was strongly influenced by African art, and from this seminal encounter grew much of what we know as 20th century art.

In this chapter I begin with a discussion of the situation in which the rural beaded cloth doll makers find themselves and the challenging role they continue to perform in interacting between contemporary cultural practice and traditional lifestyles in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Each women producer was interviewed independently and through indepth discussions each was asked a series of questions relating to the extent to which the *Siyazama* Project has impacted on her life. Further, each participant was asked how she sees the role of her belief systems in a time of AIDS and to gauge how this has played a role, if any, in her attempts to avoid becoming HIV infected. This chapter also outlines the difficulties these women have personally had to endure with the AIDS epidemic and demonstrates how some have attempted to interpret and modify their worldview in order to try to save their own lives and their children's lives.

In trying to correct the lack of acknowledgement in the previous anthropological literature in terms of the identities of beadworkers and other crafters, I have elected to use the names and addresses of the people who have participated in the *Siyazama* Project. I have obtained permission through informed consent and am confident that the use of their names will add to the overall value of this study. It is my strong belief that this study could stand as a valuable historical document in this regard.



Figure 6: Khishwepi Sitole (left) and her mother Tholiwe Sitole (right)



Figure 7: Bonangani Ximba (left) and her mother Lobolile Ximba (right)



Figure 8: Gabi Gabi Nzama (left) and Celani Noyjeza (right)



Figure 9: Sbongile Ngema (left) and her mother Fokosile Ngema (right)



Figure 10: Beauty Ndlovu

HEART AND ATTITUDE

Professor Anna Coutsooudis of the Nelson Mandela Medical School at the University of KwaZulu-Natal succinctly sums up the situation of women in the province of KwaZulu-Natal when in a foreword she wrote “AIDS has devastated society; shaking its foundations and exposing inhumane hearts and attitudes. The world has put its faith in condoms and vaccines to prevent the spread of HIV, and in anti-retroviral drugs to treat AIDS and usher in a better quality of life. Sadly, although these hopes have been partially realized, in the main they remain unfulfilled because they cannot deal with some of the underlying issues such as lack of empowerment of women; abuse of women and children and cultural norms which keep people in bondage and prevent change. Many of these issues are heart and attitude issues and there are no quick fix solutions.” (cited in Robertson 2006)

At midday during one of the numerous meetings between the Durban Environmental Health team of AIDS educators and the *Siyazama* Project producers in 2000, a participant made a very worrying comment. She announced that after hearing the information about AIDS she was now afraid

to have sex, even with her husband, as it is “not easy to identify infected people.”

This research has revealed that some aspects of traditional life in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal are barriers to the implementation of the new AIDS information in the daily lives of mothers and wives. Attempts by the women in the Siyazama Project to share their new knowledge about HIV/AIDS had sometimes led to anger and violence towards the women, if, for example, they questioned fidelity. It became noticeably evident that the *makoti* (married women) dolls were being produced proficiently, in various sizes and situations, but mostly in very large numbers. In discussion with the women of *Siyazama* on this sudden flurry of activity it was revealed that a generally held view was that one “should not get married as there is too much risk.” They then spoke of their continuing fear of sexual relationships, and indeed marriage as “just to be married was dangerous and life-threatening.” Yet, as this research revealed, simply to be married was what most dream about, crave and aspire for, as with marriage comes great respect and status in the community. The intrinsic value of the *Siyazama* intervention began to be seen as the beaded cloth dolls, primarily, the *makoti* dolls, became the visual communicational medium through which the women spoke of their fears and their concerns as married women, or even just as women in heterosexual partnerships. In short, it was through production of the dolls that the fact that marriage was deemed a problem for rural women in KwaZulu-Natal was expressed and communicated to others.

This section summarizes the major findings which arose out of the current study under the following sub-components: the socio-cultural environment within which the rural women live and operate; their immediate rural environment and their family life; and finally, their belief systems and the impact in their lives, as they see it, in a situation of a maturing HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The feedback from each independent participant is illuminated in a detailed and descriptive manner. Beginning with Fikile Sarah Ndlovu of the Siyanda

informal settlement (Section 1), it is followed by a section on six participants each comprising three sets of mother and daughter combinations from the Msinga region of KwaZulu-Natal (Section 2). This is followed, in turn, by another group comprising eight women, some of whom are sisters and co-wives. They were joined by their daughters. This final group of women is from rural areas which include Ndwendwe, Inchanga, Valley of a Thousand Hills and the Nuyaswa regions (Section 3).

SECTION 1 - SIYANDA

Glad for the work

Sarah Ndlovu is almost forty years old and is a telephone wire weaver. Her specific craft which she stated producing in 1998 is the making of the very colourful woven circular *imbenges*. Saucer shaped, these were traditionally used as lids to cover the clay *ukhamba* beer pots once they were filled with beer. Originally made from tightly woven and bound grass coils, often colourfully beaded on the underside, the new generation of *imbenges* is made from multi-coloured telephone wire strands. She learnt from "a man who was my neighbour, I used to sit and watch him making them then one day I decided to try them and I got it right." She claims that her family are proud of her achievements to date but that it is not easy as "it is very saturated here where I live (because) everybody makes them" and "the whole community makes *izimbenge*."

She explains their multiple uses as purely decoration "white people display them", or as a tray for food, or in the rural areas they are used traditionally to cover the *ukhamba*. In the *Siyazama* Project she is the only *izimbenge* maker therefore she experiences no competition in this genre. Although from a completely different and much worldlier environment to the rest of the *Siyazama* producers, who are all from very deep rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, Sarah has always been welcomed into the group. Her opinions are listened to and she is shown much respect as it was she, who in 2000, was

the first participant in the workshops to openly declare her HIV positive status and for this we all respected her integrity and lively spirit.

Her sole position as the only *izimbenge* maker in the project was induced through a very worrying and negative reaction by the proprietor of a well-known Durban craft outlet who has historically sold and marketed large amounts of the telephone wire weavings both nationally and internationally. When, at the inauguration of the *Siyazama* Project in 1999, a number of telephone wire weavers were invited to collaborate in the AIDS information transfer activities of the project, they spoke animatedly and repeatedly of a 'threat' and a 'warning'. This warning appeared to emanate from this outlet and comprised a 'black-listing' threat that prohibited telephone wire weavers from Siyanda to participate in the *Siyazama* Project programmes. I scheduled a discussion with the outlet only to be told that "do not bother to save them from AIDS, there are thousands of them." Nonetheless, subsequent interactions with this group and attempts to work with them produced only a negative reaction. As Sarah no longer sold her *izimbenge* through this outlet she then made a personal decision to stay with the *Siyazama* Project.

Although she was born and raised in Umlazi, a large formal township of Durban, she has lived in the Siyanda A informal settlement since 1990. When the government built the first two room houses there she made the move to Siyanda which is situated in a buffer zone between KwaMashu and Newlands East, two other large formal townships. She calls her house a *djondolo* which is the local term to describe a shack. She is mother to two daughters, one is sixteen and the other is a young baby of seven months. Her older daughter does not live with her but prefers to stay with friends elsewhere in Siyanda. She, too, is HIV positive.

Sarah's sole income is from her *izimbenge* making activities which she works on mainly at night once her baby is asleep. She battles continually with trying to find buyers for her work as although the *Siyazama* Project tries to help her as much as it can, she could do with many more orders. Sarah is not eligible for the anti-retroviral therapy (ART) nor does she qualify for the Government

Welfare grant. According to the relevant social welfare authorities the reason for her therapy disqualification is that her CD 4 count is too high at 420, and that to qualify for the Social welfare grant, it should hover around the 200 CD 4 count. As a mother to a young baby and enduring a continually weakening state of health, she is concerned that others may not comply with the rigors of the strict compliance required for taking ART and might prefer to refuse the therapy in favour of the Social Grant. She gratefully acknowledges the *Sinosizo* Support Group who bring her food parcels as without them “sometimes I wake without knowing what I’m going to give my children.”

Sarah claims that “finding the *Siyazama* Project has been the greatest thing” and that she is very confident about the work she does. “I realized that I can make a living from just making *izimbenge* because it puts food on the table and this encourages me to grow and learn to develop in my work.” She feels that the craft industry, since her involvement, is “getting better, improving a lot, and improving a lot of lives.” From her own perspective, and her experience in the project, she reports that “I’ve upgraded my life. I can (now) speak openly in my community about anything.”

In her culture Sarah believes that “when you talk about love you are regarded as, and called ‘*isifobe*’ which means a person who will go out with a lot of guys” and “if you talk about sex, people think you love sex, and you participate in it all the time.” She spoke of how people call HIV ‘*amagama amathathu*’ thus concurring with other rural participants who offered the same information in the study. According to her, this phrase is a way of keeping the illness hidden and secretive. Literally transcribed it means the three letters of HIV, and thus provides just enough information without having to go into any detail which may prove embarrassing. This phrase also provides one with discretion and the acceptability to have AIDS, and all its connotations, without having to mention the word.

Sarah believes that *isangomas* are best when it comes to “traditional matters”, and “if you are HIV positive there is no need for the *isangoma*.” When asked what the procedure is after one is raped she said “the community has to first

believe the person. Then go to the clinic, and then go to the police.” One can deduce from this that the victim is likely to be subjected to a character scrutiny which in turn can fuel a sense of distrust around women who allege rape in their community. She admitted that she has been “forced to have sex” and has also had sex in exchange for money.

As a concerned mother of a young baby she believes that “the government should do more for the orphans (of AIDS). They should (also) provide free education and housing.” Of her children and their future, she states “I would love them to be well taken care of but at the moment there is nothing. I haven’t been able to save anything.”

When questioned about her traditional customary beliefs and the impact that these have on HIV/AIDS infection rates she claimed “a man who has more than one wife can indeed infect all of his wives.” She firmly believes that men having more than one wife are partly to blame for the rapidly climbing infection rate of HIV/AIDS. As with the others in the study she too believes that “*ukusoma* (thigh sex) could protect young people from AIDS but young people these days do not practice it.” She understands *hlonipha* to be a form of communication with your partner about everything. In her informal settlement community there are few, if any, who practice *hlonipha*. “Women, these days, do not take good care of their husbands.”

Questions about the changing behaviour of men, if any, since the arrival of AIDS, elicited the following remarks: “Since the arrival of AIDS, men have been more insulting towards women. If a man approaches you, and as a woman you decline (his request for sex), he’ll say ‘voetsek! Go away and take your AIDS with you!’” Citing that men “tend to be very stubborn” when it comes to changing their behaviour, she nonetheless claims that “women do not get involved in a lot of sexual relationships” since the arrival of AIDS.

When asked if there are any taboos to be watchful for she offered “never eat standing because it brings you bad luck.”

Although she is not married she believes it important to “still respect herself and carry herself as a woman. Her actions will show that she respects herself, as a married woman should.” An unmarried woman is called *zenda zamshiya* and this situation she describes as “when you talk you are not taken seriously. You are unimportant. You are more or less treated like a thirteen year old.” Further clarifying the meaning of *zenda zamshiya* she claims that its literal meaning is “girls getting married and you’re the only one left behind.”

When asked about her *amaphupho* (dreams) for herself she stated “I believe in dreams. I know that they can come true. I want Kate (Wells) to grow in her studies and to be successful and not be like me. I want her to have everything I never had because she’s helped me a lot.”

SECTION 2 – MSINGA

Ties that bind

Lobolile Ximba is over fifty years of age, and has lived in her present homestead near Muden in KwaZulu-Natal for the past ten years. Previously she and her family lived at Oshikishini, a small rural township which is near Greytown, but following the farm owners “chasing us off the land”, they moved to their present land. They own both the land and the series of five large huts and a group of smaller huts. To reach her homestead one must have prior knowledge of the dust road entrance which earmarks the access to her homestead off the main tar road between Greytown and Muden. From this point one follows a further one kilometer meandering sand track over dry river beds and dusty footpaths. There is no sign or demarcation of any description. On rounding the final corner and arriving at her homestead one is struck by its tidiness and the cleanly swept sienna coloured soil surround, and the freshly painted and embellished thatched huts which greet one. The space is vast and the sky overhead appears extra large and spacious. Nonetheless one sees the impact of overgrazing and there is no evidence of any form of cultivation on the site. One is greeted on arrival and ushered towards the main hut. This forms the central pivot to the space which overrun with chickens,

some goats and dogs. Apart from aloes and some spindly thorn and acacia trees, there is no vegetation to speak of. The hillsides are barren.

Lobolile is a mother to ten children, four of whom are male and six are female, and their ages range from 4 years of age to 26 years of age. Claiming that she does not know “much about politics, therefore she does not talk about it”, nonetheless she does vote, and goes to Myudeni in Greytown to undertake this.

She has 17 dependents that she is personally responsible for and cares for them all at her home. There is no running water, no toilet facility and no electricity and this situation has not changed. Nonetheless there has been much effort put into building for the large family and most recently (May 2006) a field visit showed that a whole new section, constructed with grey airbricks, had been added which housed a new kitchen, lounge and bedroom.

Her chief Smakade Mchunu “knows” of her and is duly proud of her beadwork ability. There have been others who have not been proud of her but she is now secure in knowing that “the people that I feared before have passed away.” However there are still worries in this regard as she claims that “some people do not want others to improve.”

She asserts that “if you know too much about something sometimes it becomes a problem.” At this point the interview was steered towards current Zulu belief systems and it was noteworthy when she responded that she felt that upholding her beliefs did make her vulnerable to HIV infection, “because we rural women who still uphold our beliefs and culture do not have the power to express our opinions when it comes to sex.” She continues to practice *hlonipha* even though “it is not as strict anymore (and) there are family members that I still have to show a lot of respect for.” Explaining *hlonipha* as a “Zulu cultural practice which ensures that a married woman has respect for her in-laws”, she states that many still practice it and most especially in rural areas. Lobolile claims it’s “true” that it is regarded as taboo to speak of love in Zulu culture, but that “she does not know why. I do not understand it either

because we are not supposed to question things." Children are not supposed to hear and know about sex so it should not be talked about.

On the subject of behavioural change since the advent of AIDS in their region, she believes that men, in particular in her area of residence, have definitely "not changed" their (sexual) behaviour. She also claims that the young female population is still "behaving the same", and that "if they are not infected yet, they act like it can never happen to them." Citing the reason for this behaviour as "women do not take pride in themselves and men take advantage of that" as a signifier of this attitude, she advocates that "people should talk more openly about sex because that is where most of the problems begin, when people have sex." It is expected of the young unmarried rural female to "prepare for marriage so that she should behave in a way that will make men want to marry her."

She often includes two of her female children in her doll making activities, and although this helps financially she will only share her income if they have "worked together to make the order, but normally I do not share the cash I make." She does not share her income with her husband, who has temporary work at a furniture factory. She uses most of her earnings to extend the house "since I have a big family." Together they share the financial responsibility of looking after this large household, although it is often difficult. She "struggles a lot because I depend on the cash I make from the art" but often "I am forced to take from the money that I am trying to save for my family."

Her mother Hluphekile taught her how to make the beaded cloth dolls in 1986. Hluphekile (personal communication May 2006) claims to have "taught all the women who make them now." She began making dolls in 1978 as "she had no choice when her husband died." Victoria at the African Art Centre in Pietermaritzburg initially encouraged her to make the dolls.

Lobolile's family is "very proud because when they want something they come to me which means they think that my work is a success" and "they have a lot

of confidence on the work that I do.” Her community has also shown its pride in her work as “when I have appeared in a newspaper they call me and tell me they have seen me. Some even keep the newspapers that I have appeared in.” Lobolile won the coveted Brett Kebble Craft award in 2004 for the best craft in South Africa, and this included a large monetary award.

She feels that the other doll makers in the *Siyazama* Project are in competition with her and “it worries her because something like that can create tension among us, then the quality of our work suffers.” Spending 11 hours working each day at her craft, Lobolile has many outlets to work for. Citing them as the Bat Shop, the African Art Centre, the local community, shops and galleries in Cape Town and Johannesburg, she claims that most of her orders come through *Siyazama*. She feels that more access to the overseas market would benefit their sales as “they love our work.” She has “enjoyed the talks that we have had (in *Siyazama*), especially about things which we cannot talk about in our homes, for example AIDS, I’ve gained a lot of knowledge about this. I also like the fact that our work has been marketed through the project.”

In discussing the project’s workshops, she says “They have helped a lot. We receive so many orders through the workshops. Also we are encouraged to experiment with different things to expand our knowledge. In 2003 I won an award in Cape Town for my work. That would not have happened without these workshops.” Citing her contribution to the crafts industry as “a lot” Lobolile claims to have taught the entire current group of doll makers herself. She believes that the crafts industry is on a growth curve, and from her own perspective that her hard work has resulted in some stability as “I have built a house through the *Siyazama* workshops.”

She believes that through her dolls she “can get the message across”, as so many in her community are ignorant about AIDS and will not listen. Yet she “does not know if telling stories through dolls is an effective method” of dealing with problems such as AIDS. When people buy her dolls “she does not know if they are buying it for the stories they tell, or just because they like

them.” She goes on to say “the dolls we make tell stories that come from real people. If you know what a *makoti* (married woman) dresses like in real life, then you will be able to see that from the dolls. Then I can also add beads to indicate, for example, her HIV status. I use beads to distinguish between dolls representing young women and older married women.”

When asked about her dreams for herself, Lobolile responded with “I believe that *amaphupho* (dreams) do come true, and I dream that I have a long life and (that) my family becomes bigger.”

Bonangani Ximba is almost 30 years of age and is the eldest daughter of Lobolile Ximba. She is a Shembe believer and is single mother of two young children aged 8 years of age and 2 years of age. The father of her children is currently unemployed and when asked about his contribution to the family she responded with “the father don’t do anything.” She lives in Greytown.

Bonangani was guest of honour at the London exhibition opening of the *Siyazama* project when a large collection of beaded cloth dolls went on show at MoDA (Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture) in 2003. She was pregnant at the time with her youngest child.

For the past few years she has been sickly and has not been able to contribute much to the well-being of the family as a whole. Of the beaded cloth doll making she has undertaken to date for the *Siyazama* project, she claims that this work “is just to make money and has nothing to do with tradition.” When asked what her community thought of the dolls that she makes she replied “They always think they (the doll makers) are filled up with doll money and if we tell them to come and help or find the doll money they will not come.” Bonangani believes that there is a degree of competition in the doll making community as some of the makers get more orders than others. She postulates that this is possibly due to the overall quality of the dolls, and that the better made dolls are more marketable. It is for this reason that she tries hard to pay as much attention as possible to the construction of her dolls, and attempts “that it look good and better than anyone else’s.” If she sold

more dolls than the others “they would be happy in front of me and not when they are by themselves. They will feel jealous.”

She claims that her work has “lifted the standards for other craftspeople” and has given her a degree of confidence and pride in her craft. Dealing with the AIDS problem through doll making has “made her more aware of it (AIDS) and she knows much more about AIDS now than she would without it (doll making).” When asked about the meaning behind the beadwork on the dolls she responded with “the only beads that have meaning is the AIDS ribbon and the rest is for decoration.”

Although Bonangani agrees that AIDS is now “in the open and there is nothing to hide about it now” she claims that it is a taboo to talk about love.“ It is not spoken (about), it is disrespectful”, and “talking about sex is even more disrespectful. It is something that your partner and you should talk about and nobody else.” She spoke of how her friends and neighbours “think there is a lot of money at home and they never feel sorry for you if you ask for money, they never believe you.” When asked if there is anything to fear if she became wealthier than she is right now she claimed “No. When it is time to die I will get sick.”

Bonangani expressed a fear of AIDS infection when it comes to traditional home births in her community. “If a woman has a home birth and the elders of the community are the helpers, they don’t use gloves and they are not very clean.” Further to this, she states that “there is nothing she sees (beneficial in her traditional beliefs) because girls are no longer tested (virginity)” and this is compounded by “women have no or very little say in what the men do because the men are the head of the house and what they say goes.” Confirming that she is expected to practice *hlonipha*, she listens to what her mother and her elders tell her. Accordingly others are “scared of the in-laws and will respect them at all times”. Bonangani states that *hlonipha* means to have “respect for everyone.”

Since the arrival of AIDS, she claims that men still want “skin on skin” and do not want to make use of condoms, claiming that “they still refuse to use condoms and will even beat women if they don’t want to have sex with ‘The Head of the House’ (her emphasis).” In her opinion, the women have also not changed their behaviour; rather “they listen and never do anything about it (AIDS). They pretend to really care when you tell them about it and they don’t act on it.” The difference between women and men, according to Bonangani, is that women must be respectful at all times and the men don’t have to listen to women.” Women must “get married as an unmarried woman is not respected if she is not married” and once married “she must respect her husband and nothing else.”

Bonangani has made plans for the future. If she were to contract a life threatening illness, she has signed up with, and is a card carrying member, of Legal Wise. Accordingly this will provide her with legal advice, handicap cover for her family as well as providing for a wheel chair if necessary. This costs R40 per month.

Her *amaphupho* (dream) for herself is to get married and to own a motor car.

Tholiwe Sitole is almost seventy years of age. She lives in a very rural area outside of Muden, about eight kilometers further down the valley from the Ximba household. Her homestead consists of a clump of round huts situated in a very clean and tidy, but remote, landscape. She is widowed, and lives on the land owned by her late husband. She votes at the local police station but complains that “although we talk about politics we all feel politics are wrong.”

She has six children in total with ages ranging between 49 and 33 years: three are female and three are male. She claims that she has “more than fifteen dependents, including the children of her children, to look after as none of them work.” She involves two of her children in her doll making, one of whom is a male. He is expertly able to produce life size and diminutive Zulu earplugs *iziqhaza* which she uses to embellish her dolls. There is neither electricity nor running water in her homestead and she claims that her local

chief knows of her and her doll making abilities. When asked if she had to gain more wealth than others in her community what their reaction would be, she stated that she would feel insecure, as they would be jealous and would “think how she do it and maybe she has been to see a *isangoma*.” Others, she worryingly claims, “could end up killing you.”

Tholiwe states that her work in the *Siyazama* Project has endowed her with the financial ability to send her grandchildren to school. She has also learnt much about AIDS. She advocates for people who want to have sex, to not have intercourse, but rather to make use of the “thigh” or *ukusoma* method. She also spoke of how “*hlonipha* is human nature to her” and that “women have to be respectful all the time to their husbands as well as the greater community.” This includes “having respect for every one around them young and old.”

When asked if men, in her opinion, have changed behaviour since AIDS arrived, she empathically responded with “No. They listen but do not act on it (advice).” As for women, she claims that “they do bring condoms home for their husbands but the men don’t want to use them” and “they have tried to change the men but they don’t listen.” She claims also that “women are always wanting to learn and don’t want to change.”

Tholiwe states that it is still considered a taboo if you talk about AIDS in public places as “people think you have AIDS or that someone in your family has AIDS.” She discusses her own children’s attitudes towards AIDS with “they know about AIDS and she takes condoms from the workshops. The children take them but never use them because they are not going to change.”

Tholiwe’s dream *amaphupho*, for herself, is for men to find a cure for themselves. She believes that, in general, most dreams are for “marriage and to have a lot of children, both genders.”

Khishwepi Sitole is the middle aged daughter of Tholiwe. She is a Shembe believer and lives with her mother near Muden. Although she votes at her

local police station she claims to “never talk about politics.” She is mother to six children, four male and two female. Their ages range between 14 and 29 years. She claims to have ten dependents to look after. There is neither running water nor electricity where she lives.

When asked what might happen if she were to gain more material wealth than her neighbours she responded with “I would not feel secure. Sometimes there are break-ins in those houses that run *spaza* shops because people believe they have lots of money.” She said people would be “jealous (as in) our communities because we know each other you always learn what people say behind your back.” As for her neighbours, they “are always borrowing money from me.”

She is not married but has a partner who is a local builder. Her partner, she states, is the major breadwinner and “he has two wives, herself and another younger wife, so he gives us both money for our families because he has lots of children.” Further clarifying this point she made it clear that he only gives her money “when the need arises” and made a point of saying “in emergencies only.” She is expected to care for her family on her earnings from doll making. In this respect she also wishes for more knowledge on business matters.

As an accomplished doll maker Khishwepi is afforded much pride and honour by her family and friends as “when I have sold some of my work they come and ask me for things because they know that I have made money.” Feeling very confident about her ability, she is often told how “beautiful” her dolls look, and this makes her “feel that it is part of the tradition.” It was her mother, Tholiwe, who taught her to make the dolls and she is often told how “lucky” she is (as a doll maker).

She reports that there is some competition between the doll makers and that “it happens that sometimes when someone comes up with a new idea, for example, to decorate in a different way, others want to do the same thing if the idea sells more dolls. Then there is competition.” But, nonetheless, she

also believes that “competition helps because it inspires you to come up with new ideas.”

Working for more than nine hours each day on her doll making, Khishwepi, believes that “a centre in our community where we do our work would help make orders quickly. Also we sometimes do not know where to sell.” Stating that most of her sales are through *Siyazama* Project, and that last year was her most successful to date, she also claims that through the project “she has enjoyed gaining lots of knowledge about AIDS.”

Acknowledging that the craft industry in KwaZulu-Natal has “changed a lot (and that) the standard of the crafts have improved”, she claims that her new found confidence now affords her opportunity to “boldly go and buy the material from my own pocket because I know that I will get a return when I sell my work.” She also talks of how “she has contributed a lot of her talent to the industry” but the problem with a lack of regular customers remains a concern. She “would like to see the industry stable in a way that the craftswomen can be able to depend entirely on the income from their work. I would like the demand for our work to rise.” When asked what has helped her the ‘most’ in the *Siyazama* workshops she stated that “learning to make angel dolls and also colourful dolls has helped me a lot because I used to make ordinary dolls but now I can put bright colours which makes it interesting.” She claims that she can now readily deal with any AIDS issue in her life as although “I have not had to deal with the AIDS problem as yet, but I know that if I was to come across this problem I would have the knowledge and the tools to deal with it.”

She believes that “AIDS is a shameful subject. At least if people acknowledge that you don’t contract AIDS only through sex then it becomes less shameful.”

When asked about the embedded story behind her dolls and if this story is an effective method of dealing with AIDS, she responded with “yes, it is effective because a lot of people like our work so when they come buy a doll they are also buying an message about AIDS.” Claiming “that the traditional outfit is not complete without beads, and that a Zulu woman is supposed to wear

beads", her doll making concentrates on depicting the married *umakoti* dolls and the unmarried dolls, signifying the visually different modes of dress as distinguishing and defining factors. For example, "the doll dresses just like a human *makoti* would dress." Citing the benefits of being involved in a project like *Siyazama* she said "before we joined *Siyazama* we never used to tell stories and include messages about AIDS. Through the project we learnt about the importance of creating awareness through our work and this is how we started."

When the interview turned to the subject of love, she replied with "it (love) has always been a private matter. Even when you are grown up and can start to socialize with the opposite sex it is not something that your elders were supposed to know about. It is about respect." When asked about the topic of sex, she replied with "this is a subject only for the bedroom."

Although they occasionally get home-based care givers coming to talk to them about AIDS, Khishwepi claims that there is "little or no knowledge of AIDS" in her community citing that another word people use to describe HIV is *ingculazi*. According to an informant this word has no other meaning other than HIV/AIDS and when asked when and how it originated, I was told that "it just came." Although Khishwepi knows of a "few" infected people, including a young female family member, "people do not reveal their (HIV) status." She went on to say that "some do not want to listen. So many are in denial and they are suffering from other illnesses even when they have AIDS." When asked if people are practising safe sex in her community, she claims that "they are having children which mean they do not use condoms."

In her own case she told us she trusts her partner empathically as "my partner tells me that he does not sleep around. He has changed a lot. He does not have girlfriends on the side anymore." Khishwepi believes that her belief systems do make one vulnerable to infection "as especially when it comes to having a say in sexual matters. I am not allowed to suggest anything and if my partner does not want to use a condom, I do not have the power to say no to sex." Khishwepi promoted the idea of *ukusoma* which she described as "thigh

sex", and further claimed that "*ukusoma* is an old practice that could help deal with AIDS. This could be used as a preventative measure when a condom is not used."

As a practitioner of *hlonipha* she said not everybody practices it as "it depends on a person. Some people just do not have respect so they would not practice that." She describes *hlonipha* as "a way a married woman behaves towards members of her husband's family. She is supposed to show them respect."

She claims that "men are very stubborn" and have not changed their sexual behaviour since the arrival of AIDS, and, of women she says "they try, but they are let down by men who force them to have unprotected sex."

When asked of her dreams for herself, Khishwepi believes that "it is important to have dreams because it encourages you to work towards them" and mentioning her business intentions again she "dreams to achieve success with her business." She spoke of how she also uses her dreams to invent new creative techniques for her doll making as she "dreams about different decorating (beadwork) techniques then I do that as in the dream."

Fokosile Ngema is over sixty-five years of age and is a Shembe believer. She owns her own homestead but claims that she does not own the land on which it sits. She is also the neighbour to Lobolile Ximba and her homestead is almost immediately on the border of the property which the Ximba family own. She is a mother to five male adults and one female adult. When asked if her sons are helpful to her she proudly exclaimed that "yes, of course they are very helpful. Men love their mothers a lot." She claims to have "no idea about their ages and that maybe her eldest is about 40." She has recently been widowed, therefore she is the sole breadwinner, as well as being responsible for fifteen dependents all of whom live in her house. She is the recipient of a Government Social grant which she receives monthly.

She was taught doll making techniques by her neighbour Lobolile Ximba in the late 1980s. Fokosile claims to be part of "the first generation to make dolls

and that the tradition has been started because they have taught younger people who will be left after we pass on." When asked what her community thought of her doll making abilities she replied with "they are very happy for us and they encourage us a lot but I'd be lying if I said they have ever thought of learning how they're made." Of her fellow participants in *Siyazama* she feels that they "are definitely not in competition with me. We are not jealous of each others success so I'm not worried about them."

Working for around 15 hours per day she claims that she is "totally reliant on Kate" for her sales. She claims that "it makes her happy that we always have orders to work on when we come to the *Siyazama* workshops. Added to the work, there is always somebody who comes in to teach us about AIDS so we multitask and I like being busy."

Fokosile feels that "it's just been this last year that business has been very slow (for her) but before this and in the previous years I did make a lot of money." Of further concern is the large number of dependents that she cares and provides for. "It really is bad because the R700 I get as a pension is not enough to provide entirely for about 15 people. Right now I have no idea how we are going to survive through Christmas with all its expenses."

Noting the changes in the craft industry since her involvement she believes that her confidence has grown and that she does her best every time she produces something. Additionally "there's been a lot of positive transformation because now we've learnt a lot of designs. We can actually do anything and everything with beads. We can now look at something and be able to make it whereas before we thought we couldn't because we thought that that if you are illiterate there's not much you can do for yourself." Yet through her beaded dolls and cloths she acknowledges that she has made a contribution "in mostly showing people that you can send a message or relay a message from a beaded doll."

When asked her opinion on the future of the crafts industry she responded with an insightful statement that notes "I think it will improve a lot because

maybe people will start using beaded dolls to send messages about something else apart from just using it for AIDS awareness.” Of the benefits of participation in the *Siyazama* Project workshops she maintains that “it has cleared a lot of things. I’m illiterate so if I’m to learn something it has to be taught to me practically and making dolls has made that. Sometimes I don’t understand what they say but when I make my dolls I always think about AIDS and, yes, it enlightens me a lot.”

According to her, people are still reticent and “scared to talk about AIDS so you can just use dolls to spread the message and do the talking for you.” Discussing how she uses her dolls to tell stories she claims “I think everything lies in the clothing that we put on the dolls. It signifies something about our culture. When people see this, although they may not understand initially, they always go back to research so they understand.” She says that the beadwork on the dolls “means that they are traditional women in their traditional clothes.” Additionally “by dressing the dolls in more or less the same traditional clothes that we wear it’s like we put a breath of life into them. They become people so we are able to tackle real life issues through them”, Fokosile extrapolates further with “you cannot always teach somebody and expect them to understand. Take me for example. I’ve never had any formal education so dolls are the most practical and easiest way to learn or teach me about something as deadly as AIDS.”

“I love knowing about AIDS. This is the first time I’ve had so much knowledge about something.” Yet when questioned on her knowledge of business matters she claims that “if I was more business minded then certainly I would get orders for myself and not be so reliant on Kate.” Concerning the sharing of information with others, Fokosile notes “I do share with people, but where I live you have to choose people (as) some people are not open and leave you talking if you maybe talk about AIDS (too much) you just got to be careful. As for sharing, I know I have a problem sharing information.”

When asked about her personal safety if she were to become wealthier than her neighbours she responded with “yes, I will be secure because even now

people know that when I come to Durban I come back with money but they've never tried anything." For her there is also no fear of jealousy as "they (her neighbours) are very proud of me."

Fokosile confesses that she is often concerned with becoming HIV infected herself, "I also think about myself a lot. I envisage what I would do should I get this disease so, yes, it moves you to engage in some deep soul searching." When asked about speaking on love she replied with, "We do talk about love but not that much. In my culture love doesn't really exist because your husband is chosen for you so you have no choice." Further to this, and when asked on speaking of sex she claimed, "You do talk about sex but you do it secretly, so maybe it is taboo so to speak. It's only the men that speak openly about it but for women it is very taboo."

Fokosile believes that there is "enough knowledge (on AIDS) reaching the people." In general, she states that this information is supplied by nurses who are neither qualified nor professional "because they do not pin point anybody they just speak randomly." According to her, "a lot of people are infected and I've seen a lot of people die from AIDS. Although we knew about it, most of the knowledge reached us late. I can only share my knowledge with my family and my relatives because my neighbours and other people in the community are not open, they hide from the public." She personally knows of over ten people who have succumbed to AIDS and have died. Fokosile describes her own family, as having been "stricken by AIDS and we are all worried about it such that it actually depresses us." As the only "grown-up" in the family she frets about the huge responsibility which lies on her shoulders to continually advise and care for her large group of dependents, eleven of which are orphans. "Their parents died one after the other and I was left to care for them."

She describes the AIDS condition as "a lot of people do not come out. You only see them going through the stages and you know, but still you can't just approach them. Very few come out", she also pointed out problems with other illnesses in her area. For example, she cites tuberculosis, diabetes and high

blood pressure (BP) as all worthy of concern as she claims these are all prevalent in her community. She personally suffers from BP and for this she prefers to use the Aloe plant *inhlaba* to “bring it down (BP). I want(ed) to go to the doctor but ran out of money before I do it.”

She reported that some people associate animal names with AIDS and other illnesses but as she has “never really paid attention” she has not heard the names. She also states that “AIDS is the only illness I know of that *inyangas* cannot cure.” When her family seeks health treatment they will always go to the “healers” first and “if the healers don’t help, I will take them to the clinic/doctor because I cannot do it the other way round. When you go to the medical doctor first the *isangoma* cannot help you.”

The interview steered towards gauging her opinion, as the oldest woman in the project, on virginity testing to see if she felt this had some bearing on bringing about a reduction in HIV infections. She responded emphatically with “our cultural beliefs are not practised anymore. In our time *ukusoma* was practised.” “Virginity testing” argued Fokosile “is the best way to combat the spread of AIDS. Our beliefs and traditional beliefs would help with these diseases, like HIV/AIDS, if only we still followed them.” She then countered this proposal with “if we were still following or honouring our traditional beliefs and religions then definitely a lot (more) of people would have died of AIDS without even knowing that they are in fact infected.” Further to this she offers, “Sometimes my traditional beliefs do not allow us to talk about everything. By keeping quiet our whole nation could die. At *Siyazama* we have been encouraged to talk openly and we go back and try to instill the same thing in the other people in our community.”

When asked about the practice of *hlonipha* in her community she exclaimed “No. It is totally non-existent!”, meaning amongst the youth. Although she “grew up with it (*hlonipha*)” as a child. It was instilled in me so even if I tried I cannot not *hlonipha*. It makes me who I am and my husband chose (me) because I have respect.” Fokosile was then asked if, in her opinion, any had changed their behaviour since the arrival of AIDS. Discussing both males and

females she replied with "I'd say every person has changed in some way or another. I still haven't figured out if it's positive or negative." Of men, she commented "they are very confused. They know about AIDS but they don't believe that it's true."

Reflecting on the "good old days", she proposed that "I'd do anything to go back to the way our forefathers lived. Today's youth doesn't seem to care about anything. The men, when they get AIDS, they want to spread it. So in today's world it's everybody for himself. Everybody is selfish." She believes that teenage pregnancy is a taboo in her community and proposes that people do not question this occurrence as it is too embarrassing a subject.

She was asked how she saw the role of the unmarried female in her community and she replied with "Children were encouraged after their *umemulo* (twenty-first birthday celebration) to get boyfriends and introduce (them) to parents and if you fail this and end up unmarried, you are just a 'nobody' in the community." Of the status of the married female in her community she spoke of how "they are respected a lot, they are very important and are advisors to young girls."

Fokosile believes in dreams. Her dreams for herself are primarily to find something she could give her children, so that once she is dead they might not forget her.

Sbongile Ngema is the forty-two year old widowed daughter of Fokosile Ngema. She lives with her mother outside Muden in a rural homestead. She claims to be an active Nazareth believer. As a mother to four children, three male and one female, she also claims to have eight dependents to care for. Three of her children, one female and two males are involved with helping her in her beaded cloth doll making activities. She is the sole provider and the only breadwinner in her family but will resort to borrowing money from neighbours if she needs to.

She firmly believes that there is no competition in her field of craft making and that the environment is friendly among the doll makers. A different view emerged when asked what would happen if she were to become wealthier than her neighbours, she expressed her insecurity in this regard by saying "I would feel insecure because neighbours might steal from me." For her, and her team of helpers, it takes approximately one day to produce one small doll and approximately two days to produce a larger doll. Her sales have not been impressive recently and for this reason alone she is often forced to borrow money from others. Although she ensures and encourages the children to go to school each day, her ongoing fear is that she may run out of food as has happened before. Most worrying for her are the four young orphans which she cares for. She claims "it is very difficult" and she wishes for "the government to provide things like money, food, housing and people to look after the orphans."

Sbongile feels that "people should be open about AIDS" and if "people are in a relationship they should talk about it (sex and love). It shouldn't be a taboo." Through her doll making she has learnt to communicate on AIDS and her way of explaining this process she expressed as "because seeing is believing" and thus her dolls become her mode of expression. Social workers are caring for the AIDS infected in her community and Sbongile finds that people are more inclined to "be open" when the social worker is present. She has also been doing a bit of counseling and is helping people with understanding the different stages of HIV infection through to the full blown AIDS condition. She warns people to eat healthily as this helps to slow the onset of AIDS. Her ability in traditional doll making and her broad knowledge and information on AIDS has given her a degree of status and pride in her community "I can fit into the community well."

She is worried that some of her traditional beliefs may make women more vulnerable to HIV infection with "beliefs like a man can have more than one wife ~~does~~ put his wife in a situation of getting HIV." Although she tries her best to talk to the men in her family about AIDS she claimed that "usually they walk away when she is talking." In her opinion she believes that "not all" men have

changed their behaviour since AIDS arrived but that the “things they used to do before for example, having multiple sexual partners” seem to have changed but not for all. She made the point that women too are “not as sexually active as before” and that they are “still expected not to have a lot of men/boyfriends.”

She concurred with Sarah Ndlovu, of Siyanda informal settlement, and claimed that people in her area of residence also call HIV/AIDS *amagama amathathu* (three numbers or three alphabetical letters). Although they live in completely different parts of KwaZulu-Natal, it is clear how new slang-type language has been invented to inform and alleviate the embarrassing aspects of this disease with all of its sexual connotations.

According to Sbongile the *isangoma* is only helpful when one needs “traditional healing or when it comes to traditional disease, for example, if one is bewitched.” She feels that they are “very good at treating this type of disease” but when it comes to “predicting the future” they are no help at all. She wishes for “people to stop thinking that traditional healers can cure AIDS.”

She believes that the traditional practice of *hlonipha* is not being practised anymore, although when asked if she personally practices *hlonipha* she replied “Yes. They take good care of each other” and “Listen to each (other). If your partner says I don’t like this then don’t do it.”

An unmarried women, according to Sbongile, is “still regarded the same as a teenager even though she is a grown woman” yet a married rural woman “is now a mother. Therefore she must now respect motherhood.” She also believes that there are class distinctions in her area of residence as “poor families are looked on as the lower class and rich people are the upper class.” To achieve mobility between these classes Sbongile says “the poor families must work.”

Thinking ahead and making sure she is looked after in the advent of her own death she has joined a funeral policy called "*Umasicwabisana*." Her interview concluded with her approach to dreams "which she does not concentrate on and is not sure of", but she has dreams, and those are to educate her children.

SECTION 3 – NDWEDWE, NUYASWA, INTSHANGA AND VALLEY OF A THOUSAND HILLS

The Valley of Beadworkers

The next group of eight participants is from rural areas which are somewhat closer to Durban than the above participants. Their regions of residence include rural locations within the Ndwedewe, Nuyaswa, Intshanga and Valley of a Thousand Hills areas.

Celani Nojiyeza is almost fifty years old and is one of the longest serving project members. She has been part of the project since 1997. She claims to be a Shembe believer and as a widow, has lived on her late husband's property with his family for the past 22 years. He died in 1997 and his death was not due to AIDS. His second wife passed away earlier in 1989 and from this marriage Celani has three extra children to care for. She is not sure of the exact address of her homestead and claims "she doesn't know but her children know." She is mother to ten children; seven of whom are male and three are female. Most notably she added that she includes all ten of her children, males included, in her beaded cloth doll making activities. Her family of children, none of whom are employed, are always happy to help her with her work and "they always help when there is a large order (as) they all know they are sitting on money." She has tried, unsuccessfully, since 1997 when her husband died, to secure child welfare grants from the government. Some of the children have now outgrown the criteria for grant allocation.

She has never been to school and as the major breadwinner in the family she has to "buy them everything they need." It is difficult to cope at times as there

is nobody to help her when times are tough. "She doesn't get extra money from any one else. They will try to live on what they have until another order comes. She doesn't save any of it because it is all needed."

She started making beaded cloth dolls when she was five years old and was taught by her mother. A strict teacher, her mother would "make sure it was perfect, and if not, she would make her start again." Celani considers her doll making as part of a tradition which has its roots in contemporary culture as she has "always made dolls. It is just that now they make better decoration for them." She considers her community "to be lazy. They don't like making dolls but they love getting made (up) things, like dolls." Most of her waking hours being taken up with beadwork and doll making, she is not worried about any competition and "never worries about anyone else. She doesn't worry about herself or about other people." Although she wishes the selling of crafts could be "easier" what she has most enjoyed in the *Siyazama* Project has been the fact that "Kate (Wells) doesn't take any of the money for herself."

Citing 2005 as being the most financially rewarding year to date, she notes that "she has made the most money in 2005. The rest of the years she didn't make a lot of money." When Celani was asked her opinion of how the craft industry has changed since her involvement in the project she stated "In 1999, at the start, they made anything they wanted and people started to choose what they like and what they didn't (like). They had to change and make only what the customers, white people, wanted. In 2005 they don't use a lot of black because whites don't like dark colours. She only makes what customers, white people, want." When asked what she considers to be her contribution to the craft industry she stated "people want to learn how her beads are made because they think it's better than the stuff on the street."

Her involvement in *Siyazama* has benefited her as "she knows much more than she would (have) known before." When asked what the beadwork on her dolls means she claimed "AIDS is around and people must be aware of it." Further clarifying this statement, she noted "the dolls do not normally tell stories but the AIDS ribbon is always on them" therefore embedding them with

messages which “help her and her people know more about AIDS. When she puts the AIDS ribbon, people will know its AIDS related.” She relayed how she has spoken about real life things that are happening in her life through her beaded cloth doll making with “*sangomas* who help other sick people end up getting infected because the *sangomas* don’t use gloves and some even make people pay by having sex with them.” In her opinion, making use of doll making as a method to learn and inform on sensitive issues is a good way to build on one’s information, as “it makes people not be afraid of talking about such issues and nothing is really sensitive these days.”

Celani believes that the AIDS condition is still problematical to discuss openly because “Most people get AIDS from having sex so it’s something which takes a lot of disgust and disrespect to talk about.” Yet from her own perspective she claims that it is, “okay, people need to know about it to prevent the spread of AIDS. The women are taught by elders how to respect themselves.”

At her rural home there is neither running water nor electricity. When asked if she would feel secure if she were to gain more wealth than her neighbours, she responded with “No. They will get jealous and even now some feel that she thinks she is better than them.” She has evidence of this with her statement that claimed “some of her neighbours no longer talk to her.” Although “there is nothing she is scared of right now” she believes “some people have changed.” Illuminating on this she believes “they think she has more money. Everyone comes to her and asks for money. She no longer lends people money because they don’t pay her back sometimes.”

She shares all the information she receives at the project workshops with as many as possible. “She always tells the people in her neighbourhood. It has become second nature to her. She has taught a lot of people and they look up to her.”

In her community, the general feeling surrounding AIDS is a feeling of sympathy for the AIDS sufferer because they tend to “look sick.” Her

community also tries to help and comfort the AIDS patients by assisting and advising them where they can seek help. Celani claims that there are no health care workers coming into her area to care for the sick and many have died. Before 2000, she believes that “they used to speak more about it because it was new to them. But now everyone knows about it and they only talk about it in passing. One of my brothers died of AIDS in 1996 before they knew anything about it. But after meeting Kate (Wells) I have become more informed.”

When adults are sick they usually “take them to a doctor in Durban because there are no doctors in the area.” On the subject of *izangomas* she states that “they don’t go to traditional healers because they use the same razor blade on different people and that (practice) is not safe.” With AIDS she believes that healers “don’t seem to know themselves what really helps.” Yet, in her opinion, they do help sometimes although as she also claimed “they are really finding it hard (these days). They can only heal the symptoms, for example, if your feet are swollen they can give us something to ease the pain. But they cannot heal it.” Nonetheless, they have been known to “prolong a person’s life just like (a) doctor can in some cases.”

Citing what they (*izangomas*) really excel at is “if there is lightning. They are good at preventing it from striking the house. They put special medicine around the house and inside the house to prevent it from striking the house.”

Celani recalled that she knows of many who have succumbed to AIDS and that there is someone in her immediate family who she is currently worried about. “They have not told me but I can see symptoms.” She cited a long list of symptomatic medical conditions such as “they started losing weight, the hair started to change colour, they get big glands around the ears, the nails turn black because they have lost blood. They get sores all over their body. The sores fill with water because they no longer have enough blood.”

Nonetheless, if there is someone in her family who is sick, she will “treat them with love and care and hope that the virus in their body will decrease if they

take good care of themselves from there on.” Although she has also shared her information with many, including her peer group, she claimed that most of her married women friends have requested that their husbands should use condoms, but they have mostly refused “as they are old and have known each other for a long time.”

In her community family members take the girls for regular annual virginity testing. This practice, she believes, “helps young people; they will not have sex because they know they are going to be tested.” Considering this to be one of the most helpful traditional beliefs in her society, she also tells her own daughters that it is fine “to have many boyfriends but (that they) must use condoms.” Celani claims that for newly married women *hlonipha* is still practised in her community. This is demonstrated by showing great respect and “never looking the in-laws in the eyes and they must never be (outwardly) proud in the presence of the in-laws.” According to her, *hlonipha* is “never saying ‘hello’ to a person you don’t know. Not gossiping about people and being respectful at all times.” She still practices *hlonipha* even though her husband is dead because “she is (still) respectful because now that he is dead he can see her every move with his *bigger eye* (her emphasis).”

When asked if, in her opinion, men have changed their behaviour since the arrival of AIDS she claimed, “No. They are not scared. They say they arrived through sex (and) they are going to die by it.” They “refuse to use condoms and the women have no say.” Further to this she states that men “have a lot of girlfriends, they have little respect for women, and as they are the breadwinners, they are the only people who have an income and therefore they can do whatever they want because they know the women have no way of going (leaving).”

Celani was questioned on the role of the unmarried women in her community. She claims that the unmarried woman is “called the one they left behind if she does not have children.” When married “she must build the house into a home and must give birth to a lot of children, do the gardening and (the) planting of vegetables and fruit.”

Sometimes, she is of the opinion that due to her illiteracy she is being discriminated against, as “she does not know her true age (but she thinks that she is 44 years old). She doesn’t know which month she was born, or the date, and when she goes to visit the nurses they don’t understand her and don’t take her seriously. She is taken as stupid.”

Her only dream *amaphupho* for herself was to get married and that has already happened albeit a short but happy marriage. She also dreams that all her children will get married and that she will live to grow old.

Princess Nojiyeza is her eldest daughter and is twenty-five years of age. She is the mother to a three year old male baby. Her partner is unemployed and she claims that her mother and her granny are the major breadwinners in the family. She has passed the Grade 11 level of education. Her mother taught her how to make beaded cloth dolls in 1997. She can make a big doll in three days and two small dolls in one day. Princess reports that there are some difficulties which she has experienced and they concern prohibitive transport costs from her home to Durban and back, as well as the lack of cash to buy beads when orders come through for her work. She would like “people to understand that beading is a lot of work and you do get tired.” She feels that the rural craft industry has much potential for the future as “other young people are willing to learn to do crafts.”

Claiming that orders are “too far apart” she has nonetheless enjoyed the *Siyazama* project activities as it has provided her with “food, and knowledge about craft and AIDS.” She explained this further with “through making dolls she joined *Siyazama* which has educated her about AIDS and how to talk to other people about AIDS.” She feels that her dolls are telling impact-full stories “because you are indirectly speaking to them using the doll.” She also mentions that through her bead colours she has attached representative meaning and these she cites as “black and white meaning the *sangoma*, and blue and red meaning marriage.”

Princess claims that AIDS is a very “private” matter because people are generally scared of AIDS. Further to this she cites that “young girls grow up not (being) able to respect themselves because they are thinking of love (too much).” They should speak about sex though, as she believes that “this is good” and that this approach might help to prevent new AIDS infections. In general she believes that men “still carry on through their old ways” and “many (men and women) are still having unprotected sex.”

She is concerned that if she were to become wealthier than her neighbours they may become “more jealous than they are already” and start “hating her.” In her opinion and within the small doll making fraternity there is nothing to fear if she were to receive more orders than the rest, although she later claimed that the “older women would envy and be jealous of her.” She worries that “people might think that she has AIDS since she knows so much (about the disease)” and for this reason she does not share her information beyond her family members. She feels that one of the main differences between her and her neighbours is that now she does not have the time to spend gossiping with them as she is often too busy with her work.

In her community she feels that people do not discriminate against AIDS patients as they did before and prefer to advise patients and care for them. She also knows of the name for HIV as *amagama amaththu* which concurs with several other participants in this study from varying rural areas. She understands the *izsangoma* to be helpful but “not in everything.” Claiming that they mostly “do not treat patients correctly” Princess believes that nonetheless they come to the fore when there is a case of bewitching.

When asked if *hlonipha* is still practiced by newly married young women, she responded with “No. This shows how many people get divorced. Marriages don’t last these days.” Practicing *hlonipha* herself, she insists that *hlonipha* can be described as thus “If someone mistreats you (and) if you *hlonipha* them you will not do the same.”

According to her, the biggest taboo to be watchful for is that “you should not eat by the river because it will rain on your wedding day.” Her interview concluded with a question on her dreams, and she responded with “to be a better person than she is now.”

Beauty Ndlovu is about forty-six years of age and describes herself as a Zionist. Her current postal address is Camperdown and she has lived in the Emkhabathini region for the past 25 years. She went to school until standard three. Originally from Mkhizwane, she moved when she got married. She is mother to three children, two of whom are male, and one is female. Their ages range between seventeen and twenty five years of age.

Two of her children are involved in her craft making activities and this helps her very much as it is “a lot of hard work (and) I do not share the cash (with anybody).” As for sharing with her husband she responded with “I don’t give him my earnings from my beadwork. He makes his own money. I spend it on things for the house, for example, furniture.” Her husband is employed and works in a dye house. She considers him to be both the breadwinner, and also helpful, as “sometimes he gives me money to buy what we need. When we run out of things I also ask him for money.”

Beauty has the privilege of having both running water and electricity in her home.

Beauty began making beaded cloth dolls and beaded jewellery in 1983. She was taught by a female family member. Her family is proud of her ability “they say that it does not matter that I do not have a formal job.” Beauty reported that “a lot of them have come to look at my work but they do not show much enthusiasm when it comes to the process of making dolls.” She also considers her work to be “good enough to be considered as part of the tradition.”

She has mostly enjoyed the increase of orders in the *Siyazama* Project, but wishes “that someone could help us get access to more markets.” Recalling

the year when she won an FNB Vita Crafts Award through her work in *Siyazama*, Beauty claims that this monetary award and the certificate helped her family a lot. She believes that the standard of craft making has improved substantially since her involvement in the project and from her own particular view point she explains that "I have a new and different way to make dolls." When asked if her doll making has helped her come to terms with AIDS, she responded with "Yes, my designs show what I see happening around me with regard to AIDS. That is my way of dealing with it." Further explaining this, she claimed "It started when we joined the *Siyazama* Project. The stories we tell, anyone can relate to them because the dolls we make are a representation of human life. When I want to tell a story about unsafe sex, I will design a male and a female doll in bed."

In her opinion, the beadwork on the dolls she makes represents the difference between married and unmarried women and "it is used to represent that difference."

According to Beauty "children are not supposed to hear about love so it is not talked about" and that "sex is private, so it cannot be spoken about."

The interview steered towards her situation with her neighbours and questioned her about what would happen if she were to become wealthier than others in her community. Beauty responded with, "They way they behave towards me would change. I would have to avoid being out late because that would make me vulnerable to jealous people. People do not want a wealthy person from among them." Nonetheless Beauty feels that she has formed positive relationships with her neighbours.

Beauty claimed that "there is not much knowledge (about HIV/AIDS) in her community. People have conflicting ideas about HIV/AIDS and there is a lot of ignorance about it. I also did not know much about HIV/AIDS before I joined *Siyazama*." Explaining this further, Beauty contends that "Nothing is happening at all. You only hear about AIDS and AIDS related issues when you go to the local clinic and even that is not enough."

"I have been encouraging the youth in my family to get tested, and also to let them know that testing positive does not mean death. The youth in my community are also easy to talk to so I let them know they should not wait until they get sick to get tested but they should always know their status." Beauty claims that she is the only person in her community who has spoken out about AIDS. "There is no-one that I know of. In my community I am the only one who has had the opportunity to gain so much knowledge about HIV/AIDS."

When asked if there is an animal which people use to describe AIDS, Beauty replied with "A lion and a snail because I hate both these animals a lot" and concurring with many in the study she told us "People call AIDS *ingculazi* or 'the three words' meaning HIV."

As the family care-giver, she takes her children to the clinic if they are vomiting or showing signs of flu. In her opinion, as far as the traditional healers are concerned, "There are illnesses that can be cured by a traditional healer if you know these things, you can tell." Explaining this further she reported that "A lot of these illnesses that have English names now, are illnesses that used to be cured by traditional healers, for example 'a stroke'. I only heard of that word recently. People sometimes make the mistake of taking a person who needs traditional medicine to a doctor. Once that person has had an injection traditional medicine will no longer work. Rather take a person to a traditional healer first. Sometimes when my kids are sick I take them to a healer first then after that I can use western medicine."

When asked if she was able to share the information she received at *Siyazama*, she responded that she has been able to speak to her children, her peers and her community but she has, "never spoken to her husband about AIDS and she would not know where to begin. We only talk about the kids with him and I have asked him to let me talk to the kids about it, but not with him. My husband is an old-fashioned Zulu man. He could never talk about AIDS with me."

Speaking openly about her position as a married woman, in a co-wife situation, she informed the study that "his behaviour has changed a lot. Even though we do not talk about it, I know he is afraid of AIDS. A long time ago he used to stay away from home even on his off-days and I knew he was having affairs with other women. Now he always comes home. I have asked my husband, that, when we have sex, that he must not ejaculate inside me. This is a practice that we used before also as a preventative measure when we did not want kids but now I have asked him that we use it to minimize the risk of contracting diseases from him. He has agreed to do this."

Of concern for both Beauty and her co-wife are their, as they see it, alarmingly high chances of becoming HIV positive in the future. Beauty reported to us "It is very possible that I could become infected because the way we have sex with my husband cannot be viewed as practicing safe sex."

In general Beauty claims that it is "not easy to talk about AIDS to a lot of people. I have not spoken about AIDS to the men in my family. I have only spoken to the young boys. Some still do not believe it exists, some believe that it is an old illness that existed a long time ago, and that it is black magic that is done by witchdoctors." When asked who would care for an AIDS patient in her family Beauty responded with "It is very difficult to answer that question, as much as we love our families, we are also afraid of AIDS. It would be very hard to look after a family member with AIDS. I think it would be better to take them to the AIDS clinic that I have been told about, where there are proper facilities to look after them. In our community it is not easy to get the necessities such as (rubber) gloves which you need to care for a person with AIDS."

When the questions moved to include aspects of traditional belief she claimed, "My traditional beliefs do make me vulnerable to AIDS. As mentioned before I cannot talk to my husband about AIDS and since he does not want to use a condom, I do not have the power to convince him because traditionally he is the decision maker in the household and he makes decisions about sex too." In her opinion, "Our beliefs sometimes prevent us from expressing

ourselves. We do not talk openly about sex and you cannot talk about AIDS without talking about sex so that the knowledge that we have is usually not enough because there are things we are not allowed to talk about.”

Nonetheless, she believes that there are aspects of her beliefs which could prove helpful with understanding the AIDS condition, and she offered, “Looking at AIDS as a disease that existed a long time ago can help in coming to terms with it. A lot of people are unwilling to accept that AIDS exists because they still look at it as something new and western. Usually common and traditional illnesses are easily accepted so we should look at AIDS that way.”

On the topic of *hlonipha*, Beauty believes that “some of it is still practised but a lot of the things that were done are not done anymore” and she provided us with an example of this from her own life as a married woman. Although claiming to “not practice *hlonipha* anymore, when I was newly married, I used to substitute the names of my in-laws because I could not say them.” She describes *hlonipha* as “respect” and went on to clarify this with, “Respect is very important in the Zulu tradition. It is nature that the woman should have respect for her husband and her in-laws. The practices that we have make sure that this keeps happening.”

Beauty reported that, in her opinion, the “young generation does not care (about AIDS)” but added that “The older generation wants to stick to one partner because of AIDS.” With regard to men and their behaviour she responded with “Men have no discipline, they have never had. Even today they will stop women on the street, even when they are married. Women are less promiscuous.”

When asked what is the culturally accepted role of the rural unmarried woman she replied with “You must always behave properly so that you increase your chances of becoming a married woman” and then, once married “First, you must bear children, that is most important. Then you must do as you are expected in your new family. Expectations differ from family to family.”

Beauty explained that her dreams for herself are, "If I live long I would like to extend the house that I have now. That has been my dream for a long time." She has some savings and will use this only in an emergency.

Beauty's eldest daughter is the next respondent in the study. Her name is **Princess Ndlovu** and she is twenty-six years of age. She claims to be a Zionist and is the mother to two children, one male and one female, aged two and five respectively. They all live with her parents in the Ekhabathini region.

Although not married, she has a partner who is employed at a dye factory in Hammarsdale. She claimed that, "Money is not always a problem because we have provisions. He shares his money with the family."

Her mother taught her how to make beaded jewellery and beaded cloth dolls in 1994. Her family is proud of her work and they are "always encouraging her." They often help her out when she has big orders to complete. "They appreciate (it) and they love it. They also want to learn about it." When asked what she has enjoyed most about the *Siyazama* workshops she replied with, "*Siyazama* takes care of us financially and it is also able to get us orders from abroad, places we would not be able to reach on our own." Nonetheless, she still wishes that they could get more orders, especially "from overseas."

When the orders for beadwork and dolls dry up she spoke of how she feels about this situation "I don't feel good about myself. I feel helpless about the situation." Yet she also believes that the level of craftsmanship has improved substantially, "Each time I am learning new things which makes me competent." This newfound confidence has helped her spread ideas on beadwork making techniques to others, as she explained, "Many people do not know about beadwork. Those that are willing to learn I teach, which increases the interest of beadworking." She believes that her dolls carry messages, "Because by creating my dolls with red ribbons I make other people aware and I spread the message to others about AIDS. I am making people aware of the situation that faces us daily."

On the issue of taboos, Princess responded with, "There are things or words in the Zulu culture that are feared and are not used anyhow. Sex ... is seen as something sacred and valued so not just nobody talks about it." In this regard she believes that "I feel that although one cannot speak out loud but (that) using beads or beadwork can help express the way one feels."

Princess is concerned that HIV positive infection rates in her community are "saturated. There are many who are infected. Nobody wants to speak. Many are still afraid. You can't have an open conversation about the virus." From her own perspective she is thankful that her partner "fortunately has had training to educate the community (on AIDS) so he is aware and he knows." On discussing informing the other men in her family she claimed, "When we return from such projects we explain and pass on the knowledge we have gained" and "everybody is educated about HIV/AIDS in my family. It is something we talk about."

She claimed that the community often refers to HIV/AIDS as *ingculaza* which concurs with claims of others in this study. Traditional healers, according to Princess, are good if "you have failed to find healing at the clinic. It goes according to what is wrong with you. They help when one is sick but not when it comes to AIDS." She adamantly claimed that "They can't heal AIDS."

Princess is very concerned about rape. She reported that "there is extreme fear. Each person has to be careful when they are traveling. The fear is heightened because it may be me or someone you know." In her community the girls are tested for virginity but according to Princess "it is not compulsory. In this time I do not see many people going to be tested. People are not practicing their traditions anymore. So for me it's not important anymore."

When questioned on her traditional beliefs and the impact thereof in a time of AIDS she responded with, "People believe that when you sleep with a virgin or an infant one will be cured of the virus. That belief system is absolutely wrong." Further to this she offered, "Many (men) still do not believe in the existence of HIV/AIDS."

Princess firmly asserted that newly married women still practise *hlonipha* in her community. Even though she is not married she still practises *hlonipha* as “when I come across my boyfriend’s father I have to run away because the belief says I must not come into contact with him as a sign of respect.” Similarly, she is not “supposed to speak or communicate with” the older siblings of her boyfriend.

When asked how the behaviour code differs between men and women in today’s society she responded with “Nowadays it is not the same as the past. Men and women are not afraid of each other. And they do not respect each other as they used to, for example, men and women walk in front of elders together freely whereas, in the past, they used to hide.”

The unmarried woman is expected “more than anything to respect themselves, their parents, their elders, as someone who is still in waiting.” The married woman is “expected to respect themselves and the family they are married in because they are there to take care of that family.”

Princess believes that “dreams *amaphupho* are equivalent to hopes and wishes. They differ according to each person.” For herself her dreams are “to have money so (that) I can survive with my family, and so forth, to live a comfortable life.”

Thokozani Sibisi is forty-six years of age. She claims to have no religious beliefs and describes herself and her husband as being “old.” She was born in Kwamkhizwane and moved to the Bhobhonono region when her family changed residences. She has stayed in Bhobonono all her life on land which she claims is the “king’s land.” Thokozani owns the homestead. It has neither running water nor electricity.

She has three teenage children, one male and two female. All of her children are involved in her beaded cloth doll and jewellery making activities. Her partner is unemployed. In her community she is fearful that her neighbours may become jealous if she were to become wealthier than them and “they

might steal from her, some you can see it." She also believes that "every bad thing is generated from jealousy."

Beauty Ndlovu taught her how to make the beaded cloth dolls, and of her participation in the *Siyazama* project workshops, she reported that she has "learnt a lot" and gained "knowledge about HIV/AIDS because back home no-one explains to them about HIV." Her doll making "has introduced her to the workshops which have helped her understand about HIV." As an active craftsperson she believes in her contribution to the industry, as "each craftsperson has their own style, so her style might inspire other people and (they) might want to learn her style." Explaining her doll making further, with regard to the embedded messages, she offered "Some of her dolls tell old Zulu folk stories. Others tell their own personal story. She once made a doll of a mother beating up her child because she had HIV. This doll was to tell people not to hit people who have HIV." Her dolls are "represent(ing) things (that) are happening around her and human behaviour." In the case of the youth, she feels that "young people have a tendency not to listen, so if they see these dolls they can learn in a different way."

Thokozani believes that "you can't just speak about love anywhere. There should be a decent, respectable way of talking about it." She is also of the opinion that "sex is a private matter and if a young person is having sex it is not for everyone to know but people should know about the dangers of AIDS." Unfortunately, in her community "a lot of people are infected and the community does not know what to do." Nonetheless, the community "does not out-cast people living with AIDS and they encourage people to disclose their status." Most people call HIV/AIDS *amagama amathathu*.

The questions then steered towards the role of the traditional healers in the fight against AIDS. Thokozani claimed that "if the clinic does not help, consult an *isangoma*" but warned "many are helpful but not all. It varies, some are gifted at healing, others at seeing what is wrong. Most *isangoma*'s have assistants called *amelusi* that need (cash) from the public, and that worries her, as she suspects the *isangoma* for misleading (the patient)." According to

an informant *amelusi* can be explained as a biblical term which includes icons such as Moses and St. John the Baptist, and which describes someone who is either helping or caring for a higher being.

Thokozani believes that her traditional beliefs should not make her vulnerable to HIV infection if they were followed correctly, "Because of Zulu tradition a young person should not have AIDS because they shouldn't have sex." Of concern to her is "a man with more than one wife is vulnerable to this disease." She promoted the practice of '*ukusoma*' as this, she believes, would prevent young girls from becoming HIV infected.

On the topic of *hlonipha*, Thokozani claims that it is not practised "as before." She practices *hlonipha* and describes it as "listening, respect, and that your husband must also respect you." When asked about her dreams for herself she replied with "to get money to educate my children."

Zandile Sibisi is the sister to Beauty Ndlovu. She claims to be a Zionist believer and lives at Intshanga. She has lived at Intshanga for the past fifteen years since her marriage. Prior to this she was at Mkhezwana. She went to school up until standard two.

She has three children; two are male and one if female and their ages range between 8 years and 22 years. All of them are involved in her craft activities as is her husband who is a craftsman too. She describes her craft making abilities as mainly beaded jewellery work, but that this extends to the use of cow skin to make both shoes and drum covers. Terming this to be a "shared effort", her husband "gives what (money) he can and we also give what we can" to contribute to the running of the family and its needs. Further to this she offered "we use a budget so we don't use all the money at once."

In addition to this, Zandile runs her own crèche from her home.

She was taught beadwork by Beauty Ndlovu, her sister, when she was fifteen years old. Claiming that her family is "very proud" of her, she also offered "my

children can afford to go to an English speaking school (Indian), so I am happy that I can send them.”

Zandile believes that any competition between her and the other beadworkers is a “learning experience.” She wishes for more markets as “there’s a lack in that, and if we could find the market to sell to people directly because now money goes via another person before it gets to me.”

Discussing the *Siyazama* Project workshops she offered “I enjoyed it because it improves my knowledge and my skills. I wish it were an everyday thing.” She claimed that 2005 was her best year to date as “business people are interested in my work and 2005 has given me power to improve my lifestyle without any problems financially.” In *Siyazama* she has “learnt different styles and patterns that I have not been able to attain elsewhere.”

In *Siyazama* “not only do we speak but now we can show the message to others. We put our words into action.” With the dolls which she makes she is able to tell stories through “creating a human figure (which) shows our creativity level. It is showing the skill we have. And then when we dress her up we want her to look pretty. Not only does it show the people about the Zulu dress code and the beauty it has (within).” Further explaining this Thokozani offers “more than anything is to make something beautiful and it makes me happy to see others appreciate the work of my hands. More than just receiving money for my creations I’m joyous at the fact that, by the way I use my beads, somebody sees the art and appreciates it.”

When asked about what changes she has observed in the craft industry over the past six years, she responded with “I have experienced that beads do bring money but skin is more productive. Beads are expensive and time-consuming as well, but skin bring(s) the money quickly.” She feels that she has contributed her knowledge to the growth of the craft industry through her abilities, and especially since she encourages “each person to teach another person. I have learnt that because I do not focus on beads only.” Zandile sees

a “bright future for the industry because my children have something they have learnt in order to sustain themselves in the future.”

The interview began with a list of questions dealing with sex and love and to these questions, Zandile answered “When one says they love you, it is known that not only do they just love you but without a doubt they are talking of sleeping with you. So it is seen as something to be respected and not spoken of anyhow. The same goes for sex. It is respected and not spoken of anyhow. It is treated and spoken of with the utmost respect. We could say that love and sex are regarded as equivalents.”

With the dolls conveying messages Zandile believes it is “a way to educate people. It is another way to speak about the feelings we have. No matter how beautiful our creations may be and how each person’s life may be good for them, there are people out there who are infected and are affected. So using beadwork, at times, is a reminder of all the hardships other people go through.”

If she were to become wealthier than her neighbours, she believes that since she shares all her knowledge and teaches others to do beadwork, that jealousy would be unlikely in her case. She understands that jealousy is created through selfishness and that “sharing information gives a person power and not the other way around.” She claims to want to be wealthier than her neighbours and therefore she is working very hard.

As a day-care owner “I come into contact with all different types of people so I have First Aid knowledge. I tell people all the time about the dangers of AIDS. I take care of children so I educate people as much as possible.” She feels that since 2002 “it has improved a lot. There is a lot of patience and people are more tolerant to others who are disclosing their situation.”

Zandile, like most in the study, claims that most in her community refer to HIV/AIDS as *amagama amathathu*. She takes her children to either the clinic or the traditional healer “according to what may be wrong.” She believes that traditional healers are helpful “they do help, but there are things they can’t do

or help (with). They are best with things that are “connected to culture”, and she does not believe that “they can heal AIDS.” When one is raped she reported “as a community we call the police, (and) send them to a doctor and depending on them they can open a case. We take care of each other. We have to because it may be one of my children tomorrow, so the culprit has to be revealed and arrested.”

When asked what her husband thinks of AIDS she responded with, “He is aware that he has a family so it means he, as well, has to be careful. Everybody knows (about AIDS). It would have to be negligence because everybody has been educated.” In addition, she offered “Yes, he carries condoms; he checks regularly, he takes care of himself.” When asked if she felt there was any risk of her becoming HIV infected she replied with “It could happen to me. I’m not sure, but highly unlikely.” She firmly believes that “when one person has the disease, (he/she) is to refrain from sexual activities in order to be safe or even not to spread the disease.”

Zandile berated the community health workers in her area with “they do exist, but they are very negligent when it comes to work. They do not do the work they are supposed to.” She claimed that girls are tested for virginity in her community but that “it’s not compulsory. Others practise in the privacy of their own homes.” She believes that this practice does help to prevent the spread of HIV with “if a virgin knows that they will be tested, they would abstain from sexual activity.” When asked if she considered any of her traditional beliefs to be unhelpful when it comes to AIDS, Zandile responded empathically with “yes, the belief of sleeping with a virgin.”

In an attempt to assist with the growing orphan population in her area, Zandile is currently in the process of applying for a license which will allow her to care for orphans. She feels that “everybody has to look after an orphan child. One must treat that child as though they were your own.”

On the topic of *hlonipha* Zandile responded with, “Culture has been revived, so yes, newly married women (are) now practising it.” Explaining that she,

too, practices *hlonipha*, she described this as, “Especially when my parents-in-law come. I still have to kneel down to give them food.” This, she reported is “to show respect. To show how you were raised. It’s a reflection of your background.” Further to this she offered, “It’s hard and it’s a taboo to speak to children about sex and sex education. Because of the times we live in, we are forced to speak about these things.”

When asked of the culturally expected role for the unmarried women in today’s society, she replied with “To respect yourself and to get married (and) then have children in wedlock.” Once married, “we expect children and you must respect the in-laws.”

Zandile was asked what her dreams *amaphupho* are for herself and she responded with “To have money for my family, to send my children to tertiary and (to) improve their lives.”

The final two participants in the study are sisters. **Gabi Gabi Nzama** lives at KwaNyuswa, Botha’s Hill. Gabi Gabi is of the Apostolic faith. She lived at Emaphephetheni before her marriage, and after the marriage moved to KwaNyuswa to her in-laws land. She is a widow as her husband passed away two years ago. She has no children of her own, but cares for her sister’s two children whom she describes as her dependents. She stayed at school until passing standard two.

She began making beaded cloth dolls in 1980 when she was taught by “another woman.” Although she was not sure that these would sell at this point, she continued making them and now considers this activity “as a career.” Both of her sister’s children, a boy and a girl, are involved in her beadworking activities. For the rest of the family, she claimed they “don’t care about what I do, and I personally don’t care if they are proud (of me) or not.” The rest of the community, according to Gabi Gabi, is of the opinion that “some people don’t see it as something they would like to do, but there are others that have been inspired and start doing (it) themselves.”

When asked what she had enjoyed most in the *Siyazama* Project workshops, she responded with "To know that we have rights and also to see people buying our work." She added, "Making these dolls makes me feel emotional because I have lost more than ten people in my family." Gabi Gabi spoke out about her own real life situation and how she has told this story, over and over, through her dolls "It happened to me personally. My (late) husband was a traditional healer. One day a patient came to my home and my husband fled with this patient. I then decided to portray this in my artwork. So basically, I use my craftwork to express my own feelings, and it helps me deal with all different things (that) I've gone through in my life. My artwork is what I feel. I stopped having sex when I found out about this. My husband later died, and stopping to have sex saved me, because I cut it off on time."

Later in the interview she noted that "I've never experienced using things like condoms or having anal sex because my husband was having an affair with other women, and I chose to stay faithful. I've never had the chance to implement any other way of practising sex. I stopped having sex with him when he started cheating. I was the one who was informed about this illness and yes, this is the reason I've decided to not be sexually active again."

When asked if the men listen to her advice on AIDS she claimed "Men do not listen to women. Most of them don't believe that there's really AIDS. They still want to follow tradition. For example, when my husband died I was supposed to marry his brother and I was empowered to say 'No', to refuse, because I had the knowledge and I know that I have the right to say no." Gabi Gabi noted, later in the interview, that she is currently worried about her late husband's brother whom she believes to be showing symptoms of HIV infection.

Of her traditional beliefs she spoke out about how "in my culture (one) is not permitted to re-marry if their husband dies, or decides to marry someone else." She suggests that "if you are a mother to stay as a mother, and be faithful to your (late) husband, but don't stand for anything."

She was questioned about the effectiveness of the method of expression which is used in *Siyazama*, and to this, she replied with, "Yes (and) no, because it does not stop people to die but the stories are about weddings, courtship and unmarried people." On the issue of marriage she claimed "I think there are people who are created to be married which is a blessing from God, but for those who are not married, (this) does not mean they are cursed."

The topic of discussion moved to the issue about her personal security in her community if she was to become wealthier than her neighbours, and she replied with, "I'm not really sure because people change. People just become your enemy in the blink of an eye in the rural areas. I personally can see a person if they are being pretentious or not, so whether they show (jealousy) or not, I will know. Mostly you can tell from facial expressions."

Nonetheless, Gabi Gabi reported that although there is a lot of poverty where she lives, she is shown a degree of respect from her neighbours for her special abilities, and "anybody who makes money is admired." She feels that her neighbours see her as a communicator of information with her statement that, "If I'm not out to sell my work I can sit and talk to my neighbours about how the people in the city live and I'm like (both) the communication and the barrier between city life and the rural area life. They love to know about what happens in the city because they want to take that and use it to change, and improve, their lives."

Gabi Gabi was asked to what degree the male members in rural families support their mothers, and to this she responded with, "Oh Yes! Their mothers are important. When they are old, they'll actually take them and live with them. Mostly their mothers are more important than their wives."

When asked about what is happening in her community in terms of the HIV/AIDS epidemic she replied with, "People are scared to attend talks and meetings about AIDS, simply because it's a taboo (and) you are not allowed to openly talk about HIV/AIDS." From her own personal perspective she

believes that she has “contributed a lot. I’ve talked to the women in my community, shared everything I know and I have helped a lot of people though sometimes my knowledge gets to them too late.” She is pleased about the community health workers. They “go from house to house teaching us about this virus” and “the house visits are good because this way the information gets to more or less everybody.”

Gabi Gabi claims that there are “a lot of HIV infected people” in her community and they “are very open about this. The infected people live healthy lives because they don’t carry the burden by themselves.”

She was asked about what people call AIDS and she responded with “they call it ‘the disease’, some call it ‘the three alphabets HIV’, and some call it ‘heels’ as in stiletto heels or *eggokns*.”

She claimed that traditional healers “are helpful in other illnesses, but not HIV.” They “do claim to have the cure, but infected people end up dead. As the curing medicine you are given *imbiza*.” She added, “Traditional ointment *ukugcaba* is very risky because the traditional healer re-uses the same razor blade unless you bring your own.” In her opinion they are best at healing “headaches.” She is “well-aware” of the symptoms of AIDS and she described this as “most people get mouth sores and sores at the back of the ears. Some people, when you help them, you find that their anus and vagina have merged, become one. When they relieve themselves, they emit a terrible odour.”

In her opinion the “majority of the people, especially the teenagers, don’t practise safe sex because they want government grants when they give birth. Basically, they want child support grants.” In her community virginity testing is carried out but by “choice only.” Gabi Gabi reported that “most of the women or girls that are tested are those that have attended church. Their husbands are chosen for them at church. They go for virginity testing until they are married. Also, they are not allowed to engage in sexual activities with their future husbands. The testing is done by women but just before the wedding,

the girl is taken to the doctor to get tested for HIV/AIDS.” Gabi Gabi feels that this is a very helpful traditional practice.

Of grave concern, she reported that her neighbours consist of a household of nine orphaned children, and although they receive “a government grant, it is not enough to go around. I don’t know what could help although I pray that God will give us an answer.”

On the topic of *hlonipha* she expressed the following, “When we have traditional functions and you have all your in-laws together then, yes, I do practise *hlonipha* but otherwise there really isn’t any time for it.” In explaining it further she claimed, “It’s a Zulu tradition which actually suppresses the women’s’ feelings. It makes us inferior to our male counterparts. It actually makes us servants to our husbands, and (the female) is only supposed to please her husband by saying ‘yes’ to everything.”

Gabi Gabi was asked if, in her opinion, men have changed their behaviour since the arrival of AIDS and to this question she replied empathically with, “They haven’t changed their behaviour. They brought to earth through sex so they can’t do anything about it. They go on having sex, basically they don’t care, and they are very ignorant.”

She believes that much has changed for women with, “It is very different, they are afraid for their lives and they keep an eye on their husbands so that if they cheat then they know that sex will be cut off.” In her community the “unmarried women are called *zenda zamshiya* meaning that other women have married and she’s left behind. She’s unimportant in the community; she’s in-between almost like a cast-out.” The married women’s role is to have “children, clean the house, change your maiden name to your husbands, and most importantly you are supposed to honour and obey your husband forever.”

Gabi Gabi was asked what her dreams are for herself and to this she replied “I always dream of having a big house, and living a posh life, but because of

our illiteracy I cannot achieve these dreams.” Nonetheless she claimed “Beads have changed my life. I have at least achieved part of my dream. I have a house and live a more or less okay life so I’m happy about that. I still dream that it (beadwork) could still help me more in terms of helping my family somehow. Maybe if I could register for a pension fund through my craftwork; at least I’ll know my family will be well taken care of should I die.”

Buzani Shangase is Gabi Gabi’s sister and she lives in KwaNyuswa in the Emaqadeni region. She moved from Kwamkheswane to KwaNyuswa to her husband’s family when she married. She is a Zionist and is about thirty five years of age. Buzani has had no formal education at all. She has five children, three male and two female, ranging in age from a year old to seventeen years of age. Buzani reports that none of her children are involved in her beadworking activities.

As her husband is employed at a factory in Pinetown, she claims that he is the major breadwinner. Buzani uses the money she makes primarily for groceries for her family and “we believe in sharing the cash as a family. No one person (in the family) keeps all the cash.” She reported that she occupies a more privileged position than others with her claim that “Truth be told, we do not starve whether there is money or not.”

Buzani was taught to make beaded jewellery by her sisters and her elders as “it was something in the family.” She told the study that “even my husband encourages me, and when I have a huge order he will sit with me and help me.” As part of the *Siyazama* producer group she reported that “everybody is here to learn from one another (and) not to compete with one another. There is no competition just a learning experience.” In her opinion, the *Siyazama* workshops have been enjoyable because “I really enjoy that we are taken care of financially, emotionally and physically.” She offered more on the financial issue with, “Here the pricing is really nice, because it is much more of a higher value, whereas other places, our goods are priced far too low.”

Buzani was asked about the taboos with discussions on love and sex and she reported as such, "Yes, in the olden days but now we are advised to be more open about it. Coming from elders, it (the discussion of sex) is intimidating, but when it is a discussion amongst peers it is not that much of a problem, or not that much intimidating." She was asked to describe her work in the *Siyazama* project and to this she replied, "Each doll has its own attire to distinguish between a bride (and an unmarried woman). I use the colours accordingly, and I use the AIDS ribbon to educate the people about AIDS."

Buzani claimed that in her community people mostly know how to protect themselves against AIDS, which people term *amagama amathathu*, and "people do believe that AIDS (is) existing. Others try to protect themselves; others fail because I find that they are sick. There are those who are shunned but mostly I have seen that they are being taken care of."

When asked how many were infected in her community she exclaimed "I am scared to reveal because it is not something I am at liberty to say, although there are three who are open."

When the children are sick she takes them "to the clinic. Failing which we take them to a traditional healer if we see that it's not a 'medical problem' but related to tradition." Accordingly the traditional healers offer their patients "liquids called *isiwasro* and prayer. When it comes to AIDS I have not come across anyone who has healed it."

Feeling strongly about the threat of rape in her community, she reported "There is a big problem because people become afraid that maybe it could happen to (our) children. You can never be sure that they are really safe especially when they are not with you."

Buzani claimed to have told many in her family and community about the information which she has on AIDS. "Everybody, as well as my neighbours, we told them as well. We showed them that when we make our creations we use the red AIDS ribbon to make people aware of the virus." In her own

marriage she claimed that her husband "is also scared. He feels he should protect himself. He carries condoms." From her own perspective Buzani claimed "I trust myself because I know I am faithful. I tell him and warn him to protect himself, in case. We have five children and they are all healthy. We don't have a reason to be scared. He carries condoms and I do trust that he is also faithful. I cannot guarantee that he is not somewhere with someone else because I am not with him at all times." She reported more of her concerns in this regard with, "I cant' say I'm safe because I'm not always with my husband; he may carry condoms but it does not mean he uses them."

She offered "I'm a Zulu woman who believes that once married you only sleep with that one man who is your husband."

In her community Buzani reported that there are no community health workers visiting sick people to her knowledge "though I have heard that in another community there is such a thing." On virginity testing Buzani explained, "Yes, we do have it but it's not compulsory. It's up to the girl." She believes that this practice will help with, "Yes, because each girl will have a fear of being exposed that they are no longer a virgin, hence they will face the repercussions and reputations."

Nonetheless, in her opinion, men have not changed their behaviour since the advent of AIDS with "The way I see it, they have not changed, because I see people are still having children, which means they are sexually active without protection." The same applies to females with "as well as the women because people, or young girls, are still having children." Further to this she offered, "Today young men and women do not have any shame, because they do not have a problem with being with each other in the presence of the elders, instead, the elders are the ones who are embarrassed."

Buzani spoke candidly about two traditional beliefs that she believes are dangerous in the time of AIDS and these are "when young men are praised for having more than one partner (and) they are called *isoka*" and "others believe that sleeping with a virgin or young child can sure one of AIDS." On

the topic of *hlonipha* Buzani offered, "It differs according to families, but others still practise it (and) others view it as an old or ancient practice." In her own case she responded with "I stay with my children, but if, and when there is a family gathering, I have to take up my position as a wife and have to *hlonipha*." Explaining how she views *hlonipha*, she responded with, "Its how one dresses. If there are family gatherings, a wife needs to cover the shoulders, as well as the head, as a sign of respect. They also have to speak to the elders with respect. They have to bow their heads in humbleness."

Buzani was questioned on the taboos which currently exist in Zulu belief systems and she responded with, "In my time, it was a taboo to speak about sex but now since times have changed we have to tell our children about sex as a form of education." On the importance of the marriage, Buzani claimed "In Zulu culture, we rural families, believe marriage is a big part of life so young girls are expected to respect themselves, and carry themselves accordingly, in order to be able to get married. But for those who are 'educated' marriage is not something that's an issue."

Buzani was asked of her dreams *amaphupho* for herself and to this she responded with "I believe that if one prays and works hard at it, then dreams can be achieved. I have dreams of raising my children, (and) educating them until they can stand for themselves."

Happily ever after?



Figure 11: Rural women displaying the *hlonipha* mode of conduct

Back in 1999/2000 when I conducted my first evaluation with the rural craftswomen, they responded to the effect that they were “pushing the boundaries” of their own culture. In light of the new AIDS education which they were receiving in the *Siyazama* programme subsequent to this period, I immediately became alerted to the fact that there was something hostile at work but I had no idea of the scale and magnitude of the problem. Did this “pushing of the boundaries” comment mean they were attempting to circumvent some of the prescribed societal and cultural requisites with regard to respectable behaviour in a time of AIDS?

I also began to understand that whatever AIDS education they received might not be negotiable once they returned home to their rural homesteads.

The voices of the rural women, as recorded in detail above, speak for themselves. It would appear that the odds are stacked up heavily against this small group of traditional craftswomen in their attempt to survive in the midst of the current dangerous AIDS epidemic. Clearly, from the broad nature of the programme interaction, discussions on AIDS also tended to place the rural women in uncomfortable positions with respect to their culture. Nonetheless, and from what they are saying, the interactions undertaken within the *Siyazama* project cycle have achieved a high level of success in informing

them about HIV/AIDS. They have successfully used their expert beadworking skills as communicational vehicles from which to talk openly on issues, some of which are very personal and intimate. As one respondent has claimed, the prescriptions of her culture deny her her say, but that "I feel that although one cannot speak out loud but (that by) using beads or beadwork can help express the way I feel."

They have reported on their underlying fear of HIV infection, their vulnerability to abuse and disrespect, and their inability to make the changes which they would like in their relationships. Some have also spoken of poverty and a concern about where the next meal is coming from. In general they talk of a lack of reliable AIDS information with few health workers making home visits, and, of further concern, about unqualified health workers who are "not doing their work" in the rural areas. The women are concerned for their children, and most especially when it comes to the ever present threat of rape. Some have spoken out about being rape survivors themselves, and the persistent and worrying misconception that sleeping with a virgin or young child can cure one of AIDS.

They are not only dependent on husbands and partners, but generally have more dependencies than they can feasibly cope with or care for. Families appear to be growing in numbers. They are trying to 'survive' on shrinking incomes and trying to deal with rising unemployment in the rural areas. This situation is aggravated by poor general health and as the craftswomen have reported HIV/AIDS is followed closely by high levels of BP (blood pressure conditions) and diabetes. Medical research shows quite clearly that both BP and diabetes are exacerbated by high levels of stress.

The expensive and time consuming distances from their rural homes to and from Durban, not enough marketing outlets in Durban for their craft work to be sold through, and the complexities of being reliant on tourist and global tastes are all factors which contribute negatively to their intermittent incomes. Some have requested for local market outlets which are close to their homesteads for their work to be sold. These problems are not uniquely experienced by the

traditional doll makers, who form the specific group as discussed in this thesis, but also affect all rural women in the province.

Undeniably, they have reported that the newly acquired knowledge on AIDS and their expert beadworking skills have gained them some status and that others in the community see them as having “something that others do not have.” In communities which are depleted through large scale unemployment and poverty, and now aggravated by illnesses, it is not surprising that this attitude prevails. Anything is better than nothing. Further compounding this notion is the report from a respondent that the “majority of the people, especially the teenagers, don’t practise safe sex because they want government grants when they give birth. Basically, they want child support grants.”

Nonetheless their lives are dictated to by the cultural norms which are embedded in their traditional lifestyles. They often have little choice with partners and husbands although they are independent economic income generators and creative individuals. They are innovators with expert traditional skills yet AIDS is the enemy in their neighbourhoods and its robust nature is causing an enormous groundswell of concerns.

Of concern, and a further aspect which continues to exacerbate the current situation, is the strongly patriarchal society within which this group of women lives. Playing by the traditional rules, no matter how outmoded this may appear to be in contemporary Zulu tradition, is considered to be affording and begetting of respect and highly desirable behaviour for a woman. To this end the *Siyazama* programme has helped them question some of the inherent aspects of their traditional beliefs. By all accounts, most of the rural women wish to be married and therefore be the recipients of the community respect which goes with this heightened and important status. The rural women, through marriage, may lose a degree of autonomy and independence, but this is of little concern when compared to the ridicule and isolation they are likely to experience if they chose to remain single. Worse still, being deemed

unsuitable for marriage, carries with it one of the highest of penalties and that is to be an out-cast from the community. One simply becomes invisible or, at best, treated like a child.

This study has demonstrated that there are culturally embedded risks which the women have to contend with on a regular basis. These were revealed to me both within the workshops and whilst on field visits to their rural homesteads and most of the women in the study described some sort of *hlonipha* system which they attest to practise, as well to condone. This system is by no means out-dated and irrelevant as some researchers were known to profess in the past, as even the daughters in this study are restrained by *hlonipha*. Mdlayoshi Buthelezi as cited in Raum (1973:1) offers us a good historical description with, "*Hlonipha* customs give dignity to the Zulu people. In my homestead the observance of respectful restraints results in harmonious relations between me, the family head, and my wives, between me and my brothers, between parents and children. Nor is *hlonipha* one sided, since I as head must respect my wives and children in turn. If I did not, they would remind me by word of mouth. If I would not listen, they would remove themselves from my presence as a reminder that I should control my anger. If this would have no effect they would run away from my establishment altogether." He sums up his view with, "A non-Zulu is recognized by not observing *hlonipha*: in our eyes he lacks dignity (*isithunzi*): he is an undignified person." *Hlonipha* is a type of avoidance custom which according to Raum (1973:1) is "an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is raised." Twala (Konigkramer 1989:13) in turn, describes *hlonipha* in a similar manner with, "Every society has its sanctions, so that the individual will be guided in his behaviour by following certain prescribed obligations. From childhood therefore the individual is trained to fit into the social scheme by means of a body of observances and traditions."

The rural women display highly respectful and polite character traits in accordance with the *hlonipha* practice which describes the code of conduct to which most traditional rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal subscribe. For them, it is behavioural mores which clearly list both respectable and

disrespectable behaviour. According to the participants in this study *hlonipha* may be detrimental in some respects as it could directly result in one's inability and impotence to discuss matters of intimacy with one's husband or partner. One respondent described *hlonipha* as making her inferior and servile to her male counterpart and claimed it enforces the requirement that she pleases her husband by saying 'yes' to everything. This situation can be made far worse if one's partner is Head of the house wants skin-on-skin sex and refuses to use condoms even if one suspects infidelity.

A high level of discontent emerged in the study with regard to the gender inequality that women suffer daily, and the extreme extent of this can be seen as an insurmountable barrier to survival. Accordingly, their social realm is ripped apart by the notion that "women must be respectful at all times and the men don't have to listen to women." Women must "get married as an unmarried woman is not respected if she is not married" and once married "she must respect her husband and nothing else."

The mass production of the beaded cloth dolls representing married and unmarried women, showing their status through their dress and beadwork accessorizing, lent further credence to this serious predicament and has visually demonstrated that the marriage ritual may require reification. The dolls have given rise and voice to a wide range and complex array of emotions; mostly of confusion and contradiction.

Marriage is, in a time of AIDS, provoking a great fear amid the female population. The risk of infidelity in relationships in KwaZulu-Natal runs high, and is most especially prevalent amongst the young men who desire to be considered as *isoka*. This term describes young men who are praised for having more than one partner. The study has also revealed that husbands in long term marriages are considered to be equally promiscuous, yet according to the respondents, their wives and partners, claim to find it acceptable that they carry condoms on them "just in case". This "just in case" situation is a serious attempt to target and eliminate a degenerative and costly, in both

economic and human terms, long term illness which always results in the death of the infected person.

What has clearly emerged in this current study is that it has not been easy for the women to impart sensitive information verbally, and in some cases it has been impossible with partners and husbands who have not wanted to hear of AIDS. In most cases the women have reported new phrases and sayings which describe HIV. Some refer to it as “the disease”, some call it “the three alphabets HIV” or *amagama amathathu*, and some even call it “heels” as in stiletto heels or *eggokns*. All of these terms have helped to keep the topic of AIDS both secret and private, and therefore locked in rumour and rhetoric.

One of the respondents promoted the idea of giving of names to illnesses, AIDS included, as this, in her opinion, may attach more meaning to the traditional aspects of dealing with illness rather than the western very narrow concept of disease. On this point, a further important concept, which may contribute to a greater understanding of the range of myths and responses to AIDS, is the Zulu word *isifo* which according to M. Zungu and S. Mkhize (personal communication April 2, 2004) implies that illness and disease might not be observable only in the body, but also in various forms of misfortune, and states of susceptibility to disease. Researchers of Zulu social systems all acknowledge, in societies which practice ancestral honouring, that to upset the ancestors, either consciously or unconsciously, is tantamount to inviting grave personal danger and misfortune. Professor Leclerc-Madlala refers to the ancestors as the “spiritual police”, which aptly describes the powerful position they hold in Zulu society. This concept is therefore much broader than the Western concept of illness and, in addition to the physical aspects of being unwell, recognizes disturbances in the environment outside of the individual which will require to be traced and ‘smelled out’ by a traditional healer. Some of the respondents from this study described *isifo* as “disease”, “danger”, “death”, “AIDS, that disease”; as “something that affects a person’s blood and their health in different ways which could end up in death”; as “she would think the person has AIDS because other sicknesses are normal and it is just AIDS that is called *isifo*”; as “it means death to me”; as “when there has

been a death in a family we say there is an *isifo*, then people will know someone has passed away. Also when someone has an illness we also say that person has an *isifo*.”

Since the inception of my involvement with this group of women, I have been intrigued by their broad-shouldered approach to life as women. Whilst holding the burden of care of their families and their children, they are being exposed to unreasonably heightened levels of vulnerability to AIDS infection. This situation is being fueled by embedded cultural practices which undoubtedly are subsequent determinants in their physical, emotional and social health and well-being. Yet once again, the value of the *Siyazama* Project intervention has been profound in that it has not only provided the women with a supportive method of speaking and some economic stability, it has also collated an historical beadwork archive which documents all of these concerns. This is further detailed in Appendix 2.

The great dilemma for these rural women beadworkers is that “happily ever after” in marriage may seem to be out of reach for most rural women as the scourge of AIDS has rendered them vulnerable to abuse, loneliness and isolation. And yet without marriage, they may never receive the respect and honour which they so desire in their lives.

CHAPTER FIVE NOTES

1. I am eternally grateful to Dr Alan Thorold of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal who, in June 2002, sent me an email invitation to attend the *Zulu Heaven-Herds* Lecture by Dr. Axel-Ivar Berglund on Howard Campus. My attendance at this seminar helped to build a methodological pathway for me to undertake my rural craft research, as well as guide my subsequent work with the rural Zulu women.

CHAPTER 6

MEANING-MAKING AND BEADED SCULPTURE

“The craftswomen come from rural communities that have for decades been relegated to the periphery of national life. For this reason the journey to Durban is far more than a mere marketing trip: it is also a path to a new world of experience and personal expression.” Eleanor Preston-Whyte (1988:65)



Figure 12: Lobolile Ximba beading a crucifix

INTRODUCTION

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal there are thousands of very competent Zulu rural women who occupy themselves each day with the painstaking but inventive and creative task of making beaded items. The hope is that these

items could find an external market or more possibly are made to order for dress and jewellery adornment purposes for a range of ceremonies and celebrations within the community itself. Of the latter, the *umemulo*, is also referred to as a girl's "twenty first" or coming of age ceremony, and is one such ritual celebration in which beadwork can be seen as prolific body embellishment. In addition to this are wedding ceremonies, *umhlonyane* (girl turning fifteen), and a host of religious occasions to which one would wear beadwork (Jolles 1993:42; Crabtree 2002:46).

According to Magwaza (1999:138) "doing things haphazardly and speedily is indeed discouraged by the Zulu", as she also claims that "the idea of slow, but creative movements are elevated as a doctrine that could promote the welfare of humankind." There is no doubt that the art of beadwork making is one such tradition. It requires a slow and meticulous attention to detail. It is also symbolic of a rich past and a creative culture which acknowledges and interacts with the ancestors; heralded as supreme judges of everyday actions as is evidenced with the most specific beadwork worn by the *isangoma*.

The rural women of *Siyazama* form a traditional but small cohort of the province's beadwork industry in that they are all primarily beaded cloth doll and tableau producers. The tableaux are small stage settings which depict a wide range of personal, social and cultural occasions. This specialist three dimensional sculptural practice allows them to play out their highly accomplished beadwork skills encasing, covering and embellishing shapes with intricate beaded details. For the purposes of this chapter their work in both the beaded cloth dolls and beaded cloth tableaux genres will be described as three dimensional 'beadwork sculpture', as this term, originally proposed by researcher Preston-Whyte, usefully encompasses dolls (adult and child human figures) and sculptural forms such as crucifixes, animals, and tableaux.

Good research practice informs us that the tracking of the origins of any art form should begin in the past but there is scant evidence to survey which describes the work and the lives of these specific groups of craftswomen. This

study acknowledges the work of several notable researchers (Wood 1989; Preston-Whyte 1988; Jolles 1994; Thorpe 1994) who have each reflected and written on the work of these traditional craftswomen: without their important texts no information would exist.

Whilst these authors have all recognized that this practice is a direct response to the dire economic needs of the craftswomen's present circumstances, they have also noted that this work can be seen to play a cultural intermediary role between rural societies and the white Eurocentric purchasers in the marketplace.

Jolles (1994:57) quotes art historian Jean Borgatti "...from a commercial point of view, (a) more hazardous approach is for the artist to reassert the aesthetic criteria of his or her own culture, and so risk challenging some of the inherited assumptions referred to..." He continues with "On the part of the consumer this requires an ability to recognize and appreciate modes of expression outside his or her experience. For the artist it will result in an enhanced awareness of the aesthetic principles of the source culture, because in this situation, any interaction with the target culture will depend upon the successful application of these principles. This is an aesthetic of social identity."

Having personally had long-term access to the decedents of one of the most important and prominent craftspersons in the origins of this 'new' form of art has been a notable achievement in the ethnographic processes of this study to date. This access has allowed me a rare insight into their social reality and their intense wish to sustain cultural identity through the preservation of traditional practice. Hluphekile Zuma (born Mnchunu) of Muden, Msinga, proudly and confidently describes herself as the originator of this form of beadwork sculpture when she began making dolls *udoli* due to financial pressure after her husband died "from poisoning" in 1978 (personal communication May 2006).

Prominent South African art and craft researcher, Kloppe (as cited in Jolles 1994:63) assumed in her earlier text in 1989 that the Msinga dolls were almost all made for a tourist market and that it was “unlikely that the dolls had any specific ritual function.” Although this is most certainly the situation currently, it is now most poignantly evident and supported by my Msinga respondents, that these dolls were often used in the community by young girls as functional inter-gender communication tools. Lobolile, daughter of Hluphekile Zuma, supports the historical record which infers a connection to fertility (Wood 1989; Jolles 1994) with her claim: “As young girls we used to give our dolls to our boyfriends as gifts and they were treated like real babies. We even performed certain ceremonies like slaughtering a goat and if you missed your baby you (could) ask your boyfriend to bring it to you to visit. We even named it like a real baby (personal communication May 2006).” Considering the application and adherence to the role of *hlonipha* by all rural females, both then and now, and within their cultural domains this statement provides a sense of reasoning behind the cultural inference. There simply was, and still is, no other way to openly talk about one’s affections, and hopes for love and marriage in the future.

This study has revealed that the climate is not so different today for the rural women of KwaZulu-Natal and most emphatically, when considering that it was the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which altered the course of the rural women’s beaded sculptural approaches one must, nonetheless, still consider some of the texts which warned of intrusion or intervention on the part of the so-called mediators or “culture brokers”; a term aptly applied to Jo Thorpe of the African Art Centre by Professor Eleanor Preston-Whyte in 1989. Nettleton (as cited in Jolles 1994:63) and others rightfully further the debate on the intercessionary role of the culture brokers. Several questions should be asked about “the development of artistic forms independent of the cultural dictates of the doll makers background; the causes and nature of the changes brought about by the market pressure” (p.63). Jolles argues that the “distinction between ‘art’ and ‘craft’ has never been universally applicable and indeed has always been blurred in the case of traditional African artifact” (ibid). He warns that these “distinctions” have negatively impacted on the value of these dolls which have

now been inconsiderately termed as “craft dolls” or “trade dolls” due to the notion that they must sell in the marketplace and are therefore so-called market driven craft.

This thesis argues that the beadwork sculptures of the *Siyazama* Project producers are inherently imbued with originality, meaning and asks the question as to why they cannot be recognized as pure art? Is a canvas painting any different? Internationally, ethnographic collectors, museums and galleries have recognized this embedded significance of the *Siyazama* Project works and yet it seems that some South African researchers are not yet able to take cognizance of this. Undeniably most of the literature points to an overall concern with modernity and its perceived and subsequent lack of intrinsic and artistic value. As far back as 1988, Preston-Whyte contradicts this view when commenting on Sizakhele’s Mchunu’s (late co-wife of current *Siyazama* project participant Celani Njoyeza) beadwork sculpture, “Her own later sculptures were complex and thought-provoking; the way they reveal Sizakhele’s reflections on her social position and that of those around her lifts them (her beaded sculpture) well above the level of simple craft.” (1988:70)

Nonetheless there are specific rural locations in KwaZulu-Natal which, for the purposes of this thesis, feature prominently as contemporary growth areas of this craft form. Participants in the *Siyazama* project are clearly signifiers of their region of residences as their work reflects the specific beadwork styles and regional preferences for design and colour. Much more is revealed of the regional preferences in Appendix 2 in which the project’s Collection is presented in image format with attached meta information.

The significance of the *Siyazama* Project is revealed through a reflection on the historical record and the impact of the arrival of the glass beads in the province. As discussed in Chapter 2 in the 19th century (Crabtree 2002; Klopper 1992) that King Shaka demanded that all the trade glass beads entering the Zulu kingdom be delivered to him. He then, in turn, would redistribute them within his court as he saw fit. It appears that a colour code was already developing in this early period as he would reserve certain

colours for his favourite women (Crabtree 2002:46). Whist expert beadwork skills were developing within the boundaries of the court, the young girls and women, once eligible for marriage, would move into new areas of the Zulu kingdom. With this geographical transition, their beadworking skills followed, and their regional preferences for certain colours expanded to reach all areas of the region.

This possibly heralded the beginning of a beadwork code, a form of messaging and the right to wear certain colours which were clearly identifiable. To this end, Preston-Whyte (1988:64, 1994:92) and Jolles (1993:42) agree that status in the community, age group, marital status, regional origin and gender were, and still are some of the most signifying factors of beadwork as traditional cultural adornment and this is still the case today.

As a married Zulu woman, proud of her acknowledged and respected status, she is clearly identified by the beadwork adornments which she wears (Preston-Whyte 1988, 1994). According to van Heerden, Getz and Smuts (2004:8) her attire could comprise all, or some of the following beadwork adornments, depending on the ceremony; leg pieces *ingusha/izingusha*, anklets *idavathi/amadavathi*, front aprons *utshodo/otshoda*, shawls *itete/amatete*, and rope belts *umutsha/imitsha*. These authors also clearly make mention of how beadwork styles signify and convey the complex differences between the regions of residence in regard to bride adornment. If she is a bride in the Maphumulo area, she wears a beaded headband *isembozo/izemboza*, and in the Bergville and Escourt areas, brides are attired in bright colourful bridal capes *isikoti/izikoti*. These powerfully embellished capes have intricately beaded panels, mostly made by members of the girl's family, attached and sewn in bands. More recently they can depict the hopes and wishes of the bride with beaded illustrations which include, amongst others, motor cars, houses and flowers. If she is yet to bear children her cape may have two long strands of beads attached. As an unmarried woman she might wear both a front loincover *isihapa/izihapa* and a back loincover *ubheshwana/obheshwana* (ibid).

Beadwork can not only depict, and convey information about one's current status, but it can also show one's hopes and aspirations for the future (Konigkramer 1989; Preston-Whyte 1994). At the same time beadwork can strongly display an acknowledgement of one's cultural prescriptions and the parameters within which one should subscribe, as with *hlonipha* for example, as well as to whom one should show allegiance¹. Schoeman (1983) adds to this mysterious code of communication when he asserts that some rules were indeed deliberately broken in order to give particular colours or objects a negative connotation. This point, and the lack of current evidence to support it, will be taken up later in this chapter when discussing some of the responses to the work produced in the *Siyazama* project by the rural craftswomen themselves.

Historically, researchers mostly agree that beadwork held and depicted substantial meaning in different contexts, and most especially, when it came to courtship (Preston-Whyte 1994). In the past, and up until today, it is still undeniably accepted as one of most puzzling and enigmatic rural craft activities in the province. This notion is, in part, due to its hidden and non-verbal metaphorically embedded codes of visual communication but also, undoubtedly, the inherent skill in the complex construction. I am still intrigued each time I see the perfect geometry attained in the beaded cloth dolls. Although they are mostly conically shaped, and at times slightly misshapen, this does not appear to create any mathematical problems when encircling the conical body with detailed geometric designs. Each linear circumference is made up from linking hundreds of very small coloured glass beads which eventually transform into perfect zigzag waves.

This intense interest in glass beads has also, most importantly, built up over time but has subsequently turned southern Africa into what I believe is currently the biggest reservoir for beads in the world. Only one of the rural beadworkers in the *Siyazama* Project, when asked the question "where do beads come from?" could provide a substantive answer. She replied with "China", whilst another said "overseas", and yet another offered "Cape Town."

For the rest, they all exclaimed that they had no idea. Most had no idea where they came from, or any knowledge as to how, or who, was producing them. "Beads are made from bones" was one of the respondent's claims.

The difference between the various qualities of the glass seed beads is easily detectible, as the beads from the East (India) and the Far East (China), in general, tend to be misshapen and can often lack the central opening. They are also sold loose in packets and sold by weight, which means they are not linked by a strand of thread. According to the beadworkers this can make beadwork more difficult as it provides one with the nuisance factor of having to check for the bead opening each time and, if not found, to discard the bead. The glass beads which are stranded onto a thread are far easier to work with as one can simply slip a long fine needle along the thread and take off as many beads as required. This makes a substantial difference when working on large orders and having to encircle doll bodies with rows and rows of beads often including a complex geometric pattern.

Unfortunately the preferred stranded Czech Republic glass beads come at a higher cost than their eastern counterparts, and are duly too expensive for most beadworkers in their daily beadwork activities. The glass beads on offer in Durban are all imported through a small outlet in the downtown city precinct situated in the picturesque and multicultural Ajmeri Arcade, and it has been this source that has provided most of the glass beads for almost all of the beadworkers in the region. This single outlet has developed a monopoly over the years as one of the few major appointed distributors of Czech Republic glass beads in South Africa and with this has very tight control over price and availability. Only three average size bead shoppers can squeeze into the tiny store at any one time with the result that the queue outside the front single door entrance can be long and noisy as this also becomes the time to share stories and events with each other. When in this queue, one cannot help notice that amongst the beadworkers of KwaZulu-Natal there is a proud affinity with the work of each other. One only has to 'read' their dress to understand where these women have come from; most have traveled a long distance and must return the same day once they have made their purchase.

The mystery of the glass bead industry is further implied and perpetuated when visiting the background alleyways and small storerooms behind this shop front. On several occasions, I have been invited into the inner sanctum, situated in a tiny alleyway behind the shop front, where abundant stores of glass beads are kept, and each time have felt enamoured and awed by the secretive nature of this business. There is no question that this outlet has a tight grip and can and does dictate price and availability as it deems necessary.

As previously mentioned, the preferred brand for the *Siyazama* project producers, is the stranded glass seed beads from the Czech Republic glass factory called Jablonex. Beads are made under strictly secretive conditions. In an attempt to gain as much indepth knowledge as possible about the glass bead making industry, I had the opportunity in 2004 to visit the Jablonec nad Nisou region, also called the Nisa Euroregion, in Bohemia, Czech Republic. Wanting to be at the source of the glass bead making industry, I also wished to see how and who is making these special glass seed beads which we use in large numbers in KwaZulu-Natal. The specific region of Bohemia is situated in the far north of the Czech Republic. Its boundaries in the south are the growing Zelenzy Brod area and the Mala Skala country with the Riviera River. It is neighboured by Liberec in the west and to the north the impressive Jizerske Mountains with the Polish border being only 18 miles away.

A tourist brochure picked up at the local tourist agency explained that Jablonec dates back to 1356 but permanent settlement only took place in the 16th century when the first glass works was set up in Mseno. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided for a huge change in the town's development and this was due, in main, to the fast growing glass industry. The town is positioned well for trade and rich in the natural resources of wood, sand and water, as important components for glass making. The first costume jewellery appeared in the first half of the 18th century, and by the middle of the century, Jablonec was trading with the rest of the world.

The whole country has been through its fair share of political upheavals, some fairly recent. The bead makers have also experienced dangerous competition in glass and jewellery manufacture from other areas of the world, but have weathered this competition with resilience and commitment and are now considered leaders in the field of glassworks, and of course, their highly prized ability and expertise in glass bead making.

The competition from the rest of the world, primarily from the East and Africa, has undeniably created an industry which appears secretive, off-limits and closed to the outsider. Yet this is a completely understandable stance when considering that this is a major industry which employs thousands of Czech citizens and is continually being threatened by others who not only wish “to get a slice of the action” but persevere with attempts to commandeer the unique knowledge and technology inherent in the industry. The big factories, of which there are only two, tend to be unapproachable and are not willing to allow visitors into their production units. They claim that this stance is due to safety regulations but the general opinion, from the few locals I spoke to, is that they are worried about their technology being stolen from them.

I made numerous attempts to gain access to the major Joblonex Factory in Jablonec nad Nisou. After many questions about who I was, and why I wanted to go into the factory, I soon realized that I was not going to be successful. The minute I made mention, to the effect, that I am a South African involved in beadwork research, they immediately reacted in a negative manner. They claimed, in short, that both their security and the factory floor conditions were not “good enough” therefore they could “not guarantee my personal safety” whilst in the factory. With this worrying and mystifying response I finally gave up.

Although I was initially disappointed with this denied access, I managed to visit several of the many small cottage glass bead making industries all of which are easily recognizable from the road with their twin stacked chimneys. These smoking chimneys are defining characteristics of the extent of the cottage industry. The landscape is very hilly and forested yet it almost seems

as though every second homestead has its own glass making industry. A real eye-opener was the level of human involvement and the quality and quantity of bead making as a cottage industry in tiny villages and towns like Jablonec, Zelency Brod and Zanada. In these small industries I was allowed to watch the processes as they were occurring and was struck by the numbers of young females who were working in these hot and mostly unhealthy conditions. Safety precautions were seriously lacking in most and I was taken aback by the young people standing, all day, in water up to their ankles bending over rusted machinery working at grinding glass tubes and glass beads. Although it was below freezing outside and the snow was stacked up on the outside walls, within these steamy hot interiors, their denim jeans were soaked to the ankles, and to my amazement none of them wore masks or any other form of protective clothing. In some of the production units, men were working with open flames with only fabric rags binding their hands and wrists as protection.

I wondered at this stage what the safety conditions were like in the large Jablonex Factory. If they were considered below reasonable safety levels by the leaders of the industry themselves, then the conditions on the factory floors, must indeed, be appalling. In spite of my not being allowed to visit the major factories, I learnt much about the various modes of glass bead manufacture and methods of identification. Saitowitz's (1988) work on the classification of glass bead analysis excavated from the Mgungundlovu and Ondini sites in KwaZulu-Natal presents us with four different internationally accepted methods of manufacture and these are namely drawn, wound, mould pressed and blown. In the Bohemia region I observed mostly the first three methods of production. Crabtree (2002:23) describes the Bohemian drawn-glass bead making process as typically beginning by melting the raw ingredients of quartz sand, soda, potash and chemical colourants, together. A hollow metal rod is used to pick up a glob of the molten glass. The glass is perforated rapidly with a metal rod to create the hole and drawn into long hollow tubes called glass canes which are then, in turn, cut into one metre lengths. These are dropped into plastic containers and further processing involves tumbling and grinding until the edges are smooth. Most glass seed

beads are made using variations of this process. Wound bead making is a typical cottage industry and is also widely practiced throughout the Bohemia region. As a relatively simple process to undertake, the coloured glass rods are heated and stretched, and then wound around an inner core of wire until the correct size and shape is achieved. There are infinite mutations and variations of this method of manufacture, and Saitowitz (1988) reminds us that, historically, this method was used typically by Venetian craftsmen and has proved to be highly popular even up until today. The most prolific method I observed whilst in Czech Republic was in the manufacture of mould-pressed beads. Most of the small cottage industries had acquired great expertise in this particular form of manufacture and were producing this glass bead in quantity: in numerous colours and in all sizes. Basically, the method is to press molten and malleable glass into a mould. The mould consists of a top and a bottom which are pressed together leaving the bead with a ridge that can be both felt and seen along the joining seam. These beads are then tumbled in a machine or ground by hand to remove any rough edges.

In KwaZulu-Natal the majority of the beadworkers, including the *Siyazama* Project producers, all ask for and buy the “number one” size beads. This is the smallest category of glass seed beads available in South Africa, although in the Czech Republic, I observed a size which was somewhat smaller. By all accounts and from my lengthy interactions over the past years with the women, this “number one” glass bead is highly prized amongst the Zulu. According to Karklins (as cited in Saitowitz 1988) each bead should be measured with vernier calipers and the greatest diameter and length is given in millimeters. If this is so, then the small “number one” preference bead of the Zulu measures less than two millimeters. It is very small.

BEADWORK SYMBOLISM AND MEANINGS AS TOLD BY THE SIYAZAMA WOMEN

Two geographically separate rural regions are indicated by the beadwork sculptures in the project. The area of Muden, Msinga is home to a number of the rural craftswomen. With surnames like Ximba, Ngema and Sitole all of

these women have been taught by Hluphekile Zuma. Their work is primarily doll making. Closer to Durban in the Valley of a Thousand Hills regions, including areas like Nuyaswa and Ndwedwe is a smaller group of women with surnames such as Nzama, Sibitis and Ndlovu. Their work is largely tableau making. The range of beadwork from these two different regions is identifiable through different bead colours and beadwork stitches.

Schoeman (1996) in his text *A Brief Historical Review of traditional African Beadwork in Africa, South of the Sahara*, claimed that Zulu beadwork has both positive and negative meaning. I thought that this view would provide a good departure point for the individual interviews. Nonetheless I could not get much acceptance or acknowledgement from the *Siyazama* producers who all, except for one, claimed that they knew “nothing of this.” I then changed the topic slightly to question them about glass bead colour meanings, and asked each woman in the project if the list of colours which I presented to them, had any associated meanings attached which they knew of.

What follows is the general consensus of the women beadworkers regarding the various meanings embedded in their works:

WHITE: “pure and beautiful”; “in Zulu white stands as a sign to show that you are no longer a girl, but now you can have a boyfriend. You have grown up”; “means something good like luck”; “a person who is not married and does not have children can wear this colour”; “its only for wife, married woman”; “its for peace”; “wife, peace, purity”; “purity and love”; “white beads are mostly used by sangomas”; “means virgin”; “positive, and brightens your doll”; “a virgin will wear white beads only with no other colours”; “white beads are worn by virgin girls who have never had a boyfriend or any relations with males.”

RED: “HIV/AIDS”, “for sangomas”; “death”; “danger.”

BLACK: “It goes with white which give(s) perfection”; “means bad luck”; “you wear it if someone has died”; “means that a woman wants marriage and it can

also indicate something bad”; “married women wear this on their black skirts (*usdwaba*).”

GREEN: “Does not mean anything for me but it is good when you made something out of it”; “it goes with white”; “means that a person has no respect.”

BLUE: “There is no significant meaning, besides that it chooses its people, not everybody can wear blue”; “means the sky”; “means long lasting love.”

YELLOW: “Beauty.”

PINK: “Pink stands for beauty”; “means poverty.”

PURPLE: “Make your work look elegant.”

One can see from the wide range of responses above, and by almost all respondents, that there was very little agreement on the meanings associated with the bead colours. Nonetheless, in the subsequent indepth interviews I discovered fine strands of acknowledgements from various age groupings of beadworkers in the project with regard to how beadwork has an inherent code which can be read and understood by others who either “ask” or are traditionally and culturally informed.

In addition to questions of colour, the respondents were asked about their experience in the *Siyazama* project proceedings. Presented as an emic construct a term coined by linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Pike in 1954 (Lett 2006) the function of this procedure was to provide an account, to transcribe and to translate direct responses from the *Siyazama* beadworkers, whose expertise is in beaded sculpture making.

Gabi Gabi Nzamo, aged forty-five, explained that “if you do traditional beadwork for a certain customary function then you use different colours. Most meanings lie in the black, red and white beads and the designs are just

for rituals like the wedding, the *umemulo* (girl's twenty-first), and the *umhlonyane* (girl turning fifteen) ceremonies." She was adamant that beadwork does display messages as with "a virgin she must wear an *isigege* short Zulu skirt made of white beads." Believing that "you can separate the colours according to what stage or level of life you are making beads for", she also said, in her opinion, "modern beadwork is done just to look good."

On her experience in the *Siyazama* Project, Gabi Gabi spoke out poignantly with, "I thought a lot. It cleared a lot of things for me. I dealt with my pain and I learnt to forgive and to carry on with my life. It did change the way I think, a lot. When I made this craftwork I got help, and was able to let everything go and to start living again." Gabi Gabi added "Beads have changed my life. I have at least achieved part of my dream." She believes that it is illiteracy which is preventing her from achieving the rest of her dreams.

Thokozani Sibisi, aged forty-six, feels that beadwork "represents our Zulu heritage." She claimed to be able to "make her beadwork 'talk', and, for example, she could "put letters onto her beadwork or add the AIDS symbol." She also added that "people who know about beading can easily understand the meaning." She explained this with, "If she makes the AIDS symbol, people who know the symbol can easily see what it is and what it means." Before *Siyazama* she "did not know about the existence of AIDS, but since then, I have learnt a lot about how to protect oneself from this disease, and I can teach others as well." She believes that "if someone has AIDS they need to be welcomed and not shunned, as before."

Zandile Sibisi, sister of Thokozani, is about forty-five years of age and believes that she does her beadwork purely "for recreation. I'm showing my specific skill and talent - nothing specific, with no particular message" but when it comes to the AIDS beaded red ribbon she claims, "The one that speaks a message is the red ribbon for AIDS. It is something that is international. It does not need any explaining. It is a global concern." When asked if beadwork holds any cultural significance she responded with "Yes, you can tell the difference from an Ndebele, a Venda, or a Zulu person

through the colours they wear." Zandile completed her interview with, "I've learnt to know how to use my hands, and doing stuff which a white person can really fall in love so much, (that) they want to know about my culture."

Zandile explained that her ideas for beadwork are arrived at through a "thought-process and those ideas are inspired by what she sees outside."

Princess Ndlovu, aged twenty-six, claimed that others can read messages in beadwork and "especially the AIDS ribbon can hold a global message." Of cultural significance she reported that "yes, there are beads that signify a married woman with children. Others show that a girl accepts a young man as a boyfriend." Of her experience in the *Siyazama* project workshops she cited that "I am able to make better choices because of the information which I got from the workshops." Princess concurs with Zandile, and believes that her beadwork ideas are "not necessarily (emanating) from dreams. It is a thought process that I use to decide and visualize my creation, and (I) see the colours."

Beauty Ndlovu, mother of Princess, approximately fifty years old, was adamant that although no bead colour that she knows of has a negative meaning, all colours, nonetheless, "serve a different purpose." She explained this further by mentioning that "red and black are for the isangoma", but did not attach specific meanings to any of the other colours offered for explanation. Substantiating her belief that beadwork does hold messages; she spoke of how she has learnt a lot from other people's beadwork. She also claims to always imbue her beadwork with messages which others can read. These messages, she said, are "usually obvious enough for people to be able to read them." She also claimed that the design holds meanings but that this is not easy to decipher if you are not familiar with beadwork.

She concluded her interview with what she felt she had learnt in the *Siyazama* Project programme. "More than anything I can now warn my own children about the dangers of AIDS and warn my family. I can speak openly about AIDS. I do not have the fear as I did in the past. When it comes to our

beadwork it is a learning experience. We teach each other and we learn from each other and I am very much grateful for that."

Princess Nojiyeza, aged twenty-five and the daughter of Celani, spoke of how it is only "traditional beadwork which holds specific meanings." People can definitely read "what's on the beadwork." When asked if she ever attached meanings to her beadwork, she offered that to do so, she would "attach letters and words" into her work. She claimed, nonetheless, that the "design does not have a specific meaning" in beadwork. Her experience in *Siyazama* has "taught her a lot." Qualifying this statement she offered, "It has taught me to open up to others and speak about the disease. It has taught me to teach others about preventing and abstaining and also how not to get this disease. And those who have the disease are not to feel as though they are not human and that they can still live life to the fullest." She finished her interview with, "I think more maturely now and I am willing to learn from others as well. I feel I have gained tremendously from such an experience."

Celani Nojiyeza, the mother of Princess, is about fifty-two years of age and believes that "beadwork used to hold messages but not anymore; it's for decoration only now." She claims to "never use colours for added meaning", and is adamant that beadwork, neither the colour nor the design, has any meaning other than what's "in fashion." As the longest serving producer of *Siyazama* she claims to have "learnt a lot." "I learnt a lot of things. I am now able to take care of orphans without making them feel bad because of the knowledge I've obtained here at *Siyazama*. I can now think about my experiences and understand how everything happened. I forgive and forget and mostly I am very helpful." She concluded her interview with the following "It (*Siyazama*) has broadened my horizon tremendously. Being able to tell you the stories like this way is very refreshing and liberating. I love it!."

Buzani Shangase, aged thirty-five, only attaches meanings to her beadwork when she is making the red ribbon symbol of AIDS. "AIDS is a global concern and everybody understands it." "Contemporary beadwork is much easier to work with because it is not compulsory to use all the colours, unlike traditional

beadwork, which requires each and every colour.” She believes that beadwork does have cultural significance, “There is beadwork to show a married woman. There are beads for a girl accepting a young man as her boyfriend. Depending on the way you have chosen to dress up will reveal to the onlooker if you are married or not.” Buzani finished her interview with “I’m very well informed about the disease. I’m not as ignorant as I used to be about things like this. This experience has opened my eyes and made me start thinking about things and basically everything. Especially because I can help people. It feels good to be one of the people who saves other people by warning them, and making everybody aware of this illness through my doll making.”

Lobolile Ximba, aged approximately fifty-two, firmly believes that beadwork does hold meaning, and that she purposely “attaches meaning to her beadwork, especially about AIDS.” She feels that others are “not really” able to make meaning from her beadwork messages. She further qualified this statement with “Many people are not interested in asking about the details of my work so if they do not ask they will not be able to read the messages.” Lobolile believes that contemporary beadwork “is the continuation of the old culture of beadwork. It helps to keep our culture alive.”

From being involved with *Siyazama* she “learnt how to advise people about AIDS without having to talk, but to make people look and learn.” Further on this point she offered “In my community they take AIDS for granted, but I have at least opened a few eyes with my knowledge.”

Lobolile concluded her interview with a comment about how *Siyazama* had made her think differently, and how she now places more emphasis on thinking whilst making her dolls, “The transformation is that when I now make a doll it has to tell a story or send out a message about AIDS. Now I know that when you do your work you have to think about it. It has to mean something and not do something for the sake of doing something.”

Bonangani Ximba is the eldest daughter of Lobolile and is almost thirty years old. She claims to use a "lot of red beads because a lot of people are dying." According to her, beadwork does not hold messages, "it is just for decoration now." Nonetheless she offers "the meanings have been lost but some people still know them." On this point she further added how much she "liked the beadwork of the past because it was both nice and had meaning."

Of her experience in *Siyazama* she claimed "I have gained understanding of the fact that AIDS is very much alive. I myself now fear AIDS. I can educate others and spread the word to be more aware and careful of the disease called AIDS." Bonangani concluded her interview with "I have gained experience and skills from being around other people, especially, women. It has taught me to be independent and to share my knowledge with other women and even my peers."

Fokosile Ngema is well over seventy years of age. As previously mentioned she is the oldest member of *Siyazama*. She told of how blue beads mixed with red beads stand for *isiguqa* which means a woman who is still a virgin and very old. Further information forthcoming on bead colours she spoke of how "all colours used in just one garment are worn by *amaqhikiza*. These are the girl leaders that will lead others to the river to a place where girls are chosen for marriage. Basically the *amaqhikiza* are girls that have leadership qualities and practice this (leadership) skill." She explained how beadwork holds messages with her claim "to the Zulus it (beadwork) is our traditional clothing and there are different distinctions as to how much beadwork you will wear according to the different stages of life." Fokosile spoke of how she "thinks very deeply about the messages" which she attaches to her work. "I try to convey certain messages."

When asked if others can 'read' her messages she replied with, "I do my beadwork according to our tradition. Therefore, yes, they do understand my work, and the meanings or messages I try to convey."

Fokosile was one of the few respondents who commented in detail about the design aspect of beadwork. When asked if the design held meaning she replied with, "Yes, it does though mostly I use the design to separate the different bead colours I am using. I also think very deeply about the design because it has to work with each other."

Of the contemporary beadwork available around Durban she offered, "I think, mostly today, that people do beadwork just for money but I would like them to try and understand our tradition while they do the beadwork." Fokosile concluded her interview with her comments on her experience of *Siyazama*. "I have been making dolls for almost twenty years. My friend taught me how to make the dolls and Kate taught us about AIDS, and I put this knowledge together. Now, whenever I do any beadwork I always attach meaning to it."

Further to this she added, "I haven't really changed much (in the time of AIDS). I still keep my customs and they come before everything, then, I add my knowledge about AIDS to that. Sometimes I teach others about it but for now I know a lot of things that I did not understand before."

Sbongile Ngema is Fokosile's forty-two year old daughter. She believes that beadwork can hold messages as "some people who know beadwork do know the different beadwork messages" inherent in the article. She likes contemporary beadwork very much and believes it "indicates cultural beauty." She had no viewpoint on bead colours but claimed "everyone knows the AIDS symbol". When it comes to making dolls with meaning, she "dresses the doll in a distinctive way."

Her experience in *Siyazama* has benefited her family with her response that "it helps, the situation at home has changed, because of the constant inflow of money."

Tholiwe Sitole, aged sixty-five, believes that beadwork holds messages with the combination of the red, white and black beads. She reiterated her previous comment by claiming, once more, that red means death. According

to her, everybody knows of the meaning behind the AIDS red ribbon design. "I want talking about AIDS to be normal and people must protect themselves." Of contemporary beadwork Tholiwe believes that "it has lost meaning and is only to make money and for decoration." She claims that beadwork used to have some cultural significance but "not any more." Her experience in *Siyazama* has helped her to "speak to the younger generation about AIDS." She spoke of how happy she is to have gained the new knowledge and, most especially, she has learnt "how to talk to her children, and as a family, they help each other."

Khishwepi Sitole, aged about fort-five years of age, is Tholiwe's eldest daughter. She claims that some of her beadwork techniques come through in her dreams and then, "I do that as in the dream." Although she claims to have no knowledge of the colours of beads and their associated meanings, she, nonetheless, states that beadwork does hold messages. She always attaches meanings to her beadwork and believes that others can read the messages. Explaining this further she offered "every message is conveyed in a different way. Some are words; some are symbols that can be understood." She is adamant that contemporary beadwork "will grow because the designs are interesting and the beads are different." Khishwepi believes that contemporary beadwork has some cultural significance and can be worn successfully with traditional wear.

Of her experience in *Siyazama* she reported "I have learnt that it is not a shame to have AIDS and that it does not mean immediate death. There are drugs available to help you live longer." When asked if her experience in the project has helped her think differently she replied with a resounding "Yes." From the responses one can gauge that a degree of traditional epistemological and craft skill revival has occurred through the proceedings of the *Siyazama* intervention over the years. The experience of the traditional craftswomen in the intervention has assisted them to alter and modify their worldviews, attitudes and opinions. They say it has made them think differently, and more deeply. In some cases the evidence is clear that it has

forced them to consider a more mature outlook on life as endorsed by a younger female respondent.

The women have, in general, recalled their intuitive memories of the messaging system inherent in beadwork and are proudly claiming to continue to preserve their culture through this activity. The age groups appear to vary considerably in their thinking, yet they all recognize the value of this type of work and proudly affirm their tradition through their expert skills. In some cases it is noticeably the younger generation who are more adept at recalling and finding 'meaning' in beadwork practice. There is scant evidence of any contemporary knowledge that bead colours have a specific meaning as researchers have previously claimed. In general there is some congruency with the ideas behind the white bead colour. Nonetheless, if bead colours held both positive and negative meanings, as was attested to by researchers before, this study has shown that there is no indication that this is still the case today.

Through their beadwork practice in *Siyazama* they have been enabled to demystify and unravel the cosmology of their own culture as rural women. They have also had to change their position and focus, whilst learning to adapt and to question significant components of their culture. This change occurred with little interference but became a vital necessity once the topic of sexual practice was raised in the AIDS workshops. Several told of how they were able to make their beadwork artifacts 'talk' through whatever means they deemed fit for the purpose. Through this methodology they claimed that they did not have to 'talk' themselves. But, importantly, this process allowed them to uphold their affinity to their esteemed culture and to deal with an issue which is classified as completely and dangerously taboo at the same time. This was, out of necessity, all undertaken without 'talking'.

Nonetheless, a prevailing trend was that the *Siyazama* women, and most especially those from the middle to older generation, felt more confident to teach and help others rather than being enabled to help themselves in the face of AIDS. The feeling of being able to help others appears as a new and

prominent proficiency and is one activity which is repeatedly spoken of in this study. Lobolile's poignant statement about "helping others to open their eyes" and cascading her newfound knowledge on AIDS has clearly brought her confidence and empowerment. But at what personal cost does this empowerment arrive? Leclerc-Madlala (2005:33) provides us with thought-provoking claims when she notes that "women have felt the impact at each stage of the HIV/AIDS pandemic most profoundly. During this second stage of illness and death, it is clear that the pandemic has provided a whole new set of opportunities for women to shine in their natural roles as care-givers. However, the extent to which this constitutes progress for women's leadership, as opposed to a giant step backwards is debatable." Zulu cultural traditions dictate that most of these women must adhere to the custom of *hlonipha*¹ and in almost all cases this is accepted without question.

The *Siyazama* Project beadwork collection signifies how the notion of 'metaphoric manipulation', the title of this thesis, came into being. The craftswomen used this method to report on what had to be said of the dangers inherent in their culture. As highly skilled beadworkers they employed their expertise to reflect deeply on sensitive issues which affected them and presented this complex narrative in a three dimensional beaded form.

The women have, at times, provided slightly different stories describing their tableaux. One was provided at the time of, or during the course of the workshop in which the craft was created, and the last was undertaken in the 2005 evaluation study. In most cases several years have lapsed between each evaluation. It is possible that the story has altered slightly because the craftswomen, the creator of the work, have grown in knowledge and confidence. When I questioned them on this slight variation of meaning I was told "these stories are the same." Nonetheless, I believe that as their knowledge has grown so has their position and understanding on the meaning behind the artwork. It appears reasonable to assume that the transience of this meaning is dictated by the position which the woman holds at the time of the story telling.

As a vehicle of expression it is now reasonable to claim that the collection and its meaning may alter substantially with time, place, person and circumstances.

The women also fully understood that the subject matter of their artwork would invite comment. Their effort was maximized by large-scale visual communicational advocacy which I was personally responsible for. This effectively ensured that their work was received by new audiences, other than their children and their peers in their rural homes, but that their stories were heard in the craft market outlets in Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg, as well as in prestigious international museums and galleries in the United States of America, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In my view this collection reflects a rewriting and recording of contemporary Zulu cosmology, as well as an updating of the belief systems of the traditional craftswomen.

In conclusion Konigkramer (1989:3) sums up the value and significance of beadwork within the Zulu culture with his statement "Beads were, in a very real sense, a mirror of culture and tell us much about the social, political, economic and religious lives of the people. They help define a people's concept of beauty." This poignant statement of Konigkramer's is clearly indicative of the purposeful and utilitarian aspects embedded in beadwork. In this study the role of beadwork as a cultural mirror, which has been rarely if at all evidenced as a methodology to inform on AIDS, was indeed put to good use.

CHAPTER SIX NOTES:

1. For an indepth discussion on *hlonipha* see Raum's *Monographien Zur Volkerkunde* V1 The Social Functions of Avoidances and Taboos among the Zulu (1973:1-35). For more detailed information on cultural norms in daily Zulu life see Elliott (1978:107): "Routine daily patterns of life and entrenched behavioral codes tend to create an impression that life in the

kraals (rural areas) is uncomplicated, but behind this façade a multitude of intricate superstitions and beliefs lie hidden". What complicates matters in the Zulu religious system is that life has two distinct sides to it. Elliot describes this as: "Firstly the purely physical, and secondly the spiritual combined with the magical. These two facets are, in fact, so inextricably linked that many physical activities within a Zulu community are ultimately governed by the dictates of various supernatural forces and rigid taboos."

The resultant work of the *Siyazama* Project producers is, and has been, exhibited internationally in numerous international settings. It has been highly sought after by academics and researchers worldwide for its stories on AIDS. Their work has traveled to the United Kingdom 2003 (MoDA Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture), United States of America 2003-2004 (UCLA, Michigan State University Museum), Canada 2005 (Canadian Museum of Civilization), and Sweden 2005-2006 (Museum of World Culture).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

“The battle against AIDS demands political engagement and people working together in such a way that the collective work of society reinforces development interventions and the efforts of government. An ideal response to HIV/AIDS would be one that seeks to meet the needs of people, both those infected and those affected by the disease, while promoting a culture of openness in treatment and of democratic values in policy responses.”

Leclerc-Madlala (2005:845)

INTRODUCTION

This section begins with a summary of my initial objectives and details some of the major challenges presented by the *Siyazama* Project. Explaining how the project's participants have negotiated the broad gender inequalities in their lives through their beadwork skills, this section also represents an attempt to explain why the study was important and what it revealed. I also discuss the broader contribution that this study has made and how this form of messaging on AIDS which links anthropology, art and health could be implemented more widely as a developmental strategy.

From the very start of the *Siyazama* Project an emotive collection of beaded craftworks was created. This collection was curated in a simplistic format, listing basic meta information and kept as a documentary archive. This collection grew with each particular series of informational programmes and creative interactions between 1999 and 2005, and became of its own accord a three dimensional record of the craftswomen's feelings and reactions to the new information, as they received it, on HIV/AIDS. As their awareness around HIV/AIDS increased so did their creative reactions change and develop

accordingly. As a collection of sculptural beadwork it is viewed by many as being stirring and thought-provoking whilst also, at times, unusually sexually explicit and highly detailed in its rendering. Most importantly it became a vehicle through which the Zulu craftswomen spoke of their beliefs and culture as it relates to HIV/AIDS and as it exists today. The opportunity to create this collection offered the rural women an environment in which to express their thoughts and feelings whilst exploring the boundaries of their roles as women. As posited by the craftswomen, it enabled them “to push the boundaries” of their culture.

Nicholas Thomas (2006:179), anthropology professor at Goldsmiths College, London, has suggested that we do not interpret cross-cultural interaction, but rather we co-interpret it. He poignantly argues that “to co-interpret is, of course, to interpret the same problem, not necessarily from the same vantage point or with the same ends in view.” Cardillo (2006:143) probably provides the best summary of the principles that guided the *Siyazama* Project with his statement about best practice methodology. This he claims should encompass cultural anthropology, field research, and a personal and natural way of investigation, which he terms intuitiveness, and all of this should be reinforced by an anthropological analysis towards the investigation of indigenous cultures, their environment and the life of the people under study. The works of both Thomas and Cardillo resonate with the guiding principles of the *Siyazama* programme. They are reminders of the importance of seeking a best practice model, especially when modifications of behaviour are an anticipated outcome.

My objective at the launch of the intervention was to ensure that rural craftswomen were informed on HIV/AIDS. I did not expect the poignant and evocative results that we see in the beadwork crafts today. Nonetheless, I had a firm vision; to do everything within my capacity and ability to empower and improve the lives and lifestyles of this small group of rural women. Realizing early on in the project that their financial predicaments would need to be addressed, I anticipated that a financial improvement would have a beneficial

impact on their health and their living conditions, as well as their social and emotional well-being.

Berglund's (1976) classic ethnographic work talks of the importance of listening and observing, a practice that I have applied in my work with the women of the *Siyazama* Project. Work of this nature also required a great effort to probe deeply and a great tenacity. As I have previously discussed, I purposely avoided playing a decision making role in the creative explorations on behalf of the women in the project. Instead I attempted to create a safe, interesting, informative, colourful and culturally resonant environment which challenged and nurtured creativity. As a visual communicator who has worked in the field of graphic design for two decades, this practice, I believe, provided the women with the space to explore issues around HIV and AIDS within the realm of their own magico-medical belief system and gave them the courage to express their thoughts and question some of the most private aspects of their lives.

DOLLS WITH JOBS¹

The project thus far has substantially enabled this group of women. It has led to a revival of their traditional craft, with the doll figure now taking its rightful place in local, national and international museums and galleries. Today the so-called 'traditional' doll figure is freshly imbued and reawakened with new epistemological constructs, meanings and messages.

As a form of communication, and as a form of transmission and reception of information, beadwork craft continues to be a valuable contemporary tool with deep historic roots. While it is perceived that other AIDS campaigns have mostly failed in achieving their objectives (Karim and Karim 2005; Nattrass 2004), this project has been successful. Yet, like other AIDS media campaigns, *Siyazama* has also relied heavily on visual communications as the mode of expression. The difference, however, lies in the approach to notions of culture and tradition.

With this in mind one needs to reflect back briefly on the factorial aetiology and the environment from which the study sprang. It was dominated by a great fear of HIV/AIDS and a fear of financial collapse of the rural beadwork industry. This fear was felt strongly by the rural craftswomen, and it included confusion, uncertainty, misinformation and a host of rumours. The dolls were no longer selling; the interest both locally, nationally and internationally had almost dried up, notwithstanding the greater fear of the rapidly growing and maturing AIDS epidemic. Disruption on all levels seemed imminent.

Responding to the fear that traditional knowledge may be lost forever, a claim White and Morton (2004:1) describe as “a rupture of the traditional chains of knowledge transmission”, the project had, from the very outset, been underpinned by attempts to allay this concern. The project sought to prevent this rupture through the women’s own intuitive response, questioning and dissecting culture and tradition while threading their beads, and hence rebuilding and reaffirming. In the process the women explored a new frontier in traditional craft practice, and revealed a most innovative and suitable medium to inform and educate. In addition this study has taught me much about a small cohort of rural women and how they pass down information matrilineally from mother to daughter. More importantly it has shown that, regardless of how illiterate one may be, the methodologies developed in the *Siyazama* project could be used effectively to receive and transmit information. This study has demonstrated that this mode of messaging transmission could be a more culturally sensitive and more effective way to do public health education amongst illiterate people.

Nonetheless while the messaging system was effective in imparting information, it did not allay the fears of the women to the eternal threat of HIV infection. This was clearly visible through their beaded cloth doll productions in which they “spoke” continually about their vulnerability with regard to marriage and their relationships with men more generally.

Leclerc-Madlala (2005:33) in her article on women’s leadership in the context of HIV/AIDS makes the point that in Southern Africa the entire, “AIDS industry

is shifting its focus from youth to older women as governments seek exemption from responsibility and steer the burden of care into the domestic sphere.” Nonetheless, of this grave ineptitude, she sees something positive emerging. She states (2005:36) “In many ways the HIV/AIDS epidemic, precisely because it has affected women so profoundly in so many ways, has prompted women to seek ways in which their particular talents, skills or situations could make a difference. This very same desire and determination has led a number of women to be amongst the world’s top HIV/AIDS lobbyists, medical scientists, doctors, nurses, counselors, researchers, activists, educators and trainers.” To this list I would add traditional craftswomen such as the women of the *Siyazama* Project, as it has been they who have so eagerly and elegantly used the method they know of so well; their expert craft and beadworking abilities. By doing so, they have made profound statements about their predicament. They achieved this through manipulating their traditional practice to encompass and include stories and messages which speak to the social restraints determined by the cultural codes of respect such as *hlonipha*, and the prevailing behavioural norms and expectations in their homes and communities. They have metaphorically transgressed their own cultural constraints by speaking out through their artworks. Of equal importance they have allowed the world audience at large, very visibly, to take a close and insightful look into some of the most private aspects of their lives and lifestyles.

By applying a creative solution to avert a potentially disruptive and disastrous situation, a new iconography was born. Whilst the crafts primarily speak of the AIDS epidemic, their reach has been far wider and broader. The project has effectively revived beaded cloth doll making in KwaZulu-Natal in its ten year span. It has wholeheartedly embraced beadwork as a traditional method of communication; with bead colours traditionally and still today holding much meaning for the Zulu. The beaded cloth dolls are in a sense alive and working, demonstrating how they heal both maker and observer, and how they plan to keep the AIDS orphans safe in the communities and villages. It is through these dolls and tableaus that children traditionally and today can learn to orient themselves to their land, to their belief systems, and to a range of

dangers that threaten them. The dolls also offer the children the opportunity to mimic their mother's expert beadwork ability, to learn of her traditional knowledge, and to proudly uphold and affirm their culture through their mimicry.

Although the *Siyazama* Project has been effective as an AIDS education approach, there is still much to be done with regard to inculcating the notion and risk of HIV infection within the rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal. However this is not just purely a matter of becoming informed and then making use of the information. It is far broader and more complicated, and as Leclerc-Madlala states; one must take into account the predicament of culturally informed gender dynamics and the effects of gender socialization (as cited in Wells 2000). Moreover, it is this author (2005:34) who also comments on the "disproportionate" targeting of women in most AIDS campaigns, including voluntary testing and counseling and home-based care training. If, up until now, it has been mainly women in Africa who have been targeted and highlighted as victims of the AIDS pandemic, is it not then high time that attention be paid to men; those who are spoken about as the 'drivers' (Leclerc-Madlala 2006) of the pandemic?

In support of this, a recent on-line *Healthnet News-AIDS* debate² which focused on men as part of prevention against HIV/AIDS has shown that in Africa it has long been believed, by both men and women, that men drive the HIV/AIDS epidemic and therefore should be readily included in finding its solution.

Edwin Mapara, a physician at the Athlone Hospital in Botswana, claimed as a 'known fact' when talking of the typical role of a man in African society today, "A man is a bee that touches many flowers to make honey and he is an axe that has to chop many pieces of wood to become sharp. He is the head of the house. He is the bread-winner and provider (usually). He is the economic (money) base. He dictates how the house, house-hold, family or tribe will be run, or conduct business, including sexual intercourse (how, when, type, frequency, (un)safe sex, family planning). He can never be barren or infertile.

He is the gate-keeper of traditions, culture and rituals, including some that propagate HIV/AIDS transmission. He is entitled to have a mistress or 'a small house'. He is never questioned of his whereabouts or reasons for coming home late. He is feared and respected. He controls the Church and Faith community beliefs or doctrines in the family. He is power and authority. He is, in some cases, second only to God."

Taking into account the fact that in most cases in Africa new HIV/AIDS initiatives must receive the approval of government leaders (male), or pastors (male) or, in KwaZulu-Natal, the community or village headman *nkosi* (male) need to be consulted for his blessing, it seems ironic that men have not been acknowledged. In retrospect it is extremely unfortunate that men have been largely excluded from these initiatives that address AIDS issues involving sexuality, and no doubt this has contributed to our ever-spiralling rates of HIV in the region.

It is Edwin Mapara who also succinctly reminds us that 'good women' are socialized not to talk about sex, yet men can freely, in most ethnic groups, talk freely on sexual matters. A woman who talks freely on sexual matters or initiates sexual intercourse is thought to be loose or uncultured. The elders will even ask, "Whose daughter is this who speaks? Which village or which people does she come from?"

Mapara's descriptions aptly illustrate how important it is that HIV/AIDS interventional strategies revolve around, and directly include, men. To this end, and as this study has shown, the women of *Siyazama* have spoken. If "being spoken for", as Thokozani Sibisi tells us, is the ultimate objective for rural women then this demands that men must be brought into the AIDS debates at each and every level. Unanimously, the *Siyazama* women's voices clearly indicate that it is the male population that needs to be targeted if there is to be any solution found to decreasing the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in their communities.

This study stands as a testimony to how a small group of rural traditional craftswomen have been empowered through information and have achieved a degree of economic security, prestige and well-being through their specialist skills. It has also revealed the women's sentiments about the menfolk in their lives and how it is their wish that the men are "changed" somehow.

Many believe that African women have been at the receiving end of the AIDS informational campaigns for too long. It is for this reason that this study argues that through the use of the creative art and health methodologies, which this study has described, a community of male craftsmen could be identified and invited to participate in similar processes to the *Siyazama* project craftswomen. In the future, the list of illnesses that could potentially be addressed in this way could include illnesses caused by other viruses, cancers, chronic diseases and psychological disorders. This could conceivably provide new models for research and interventions for improving the lives of similarly non-literate rural people throughout the world³.

From a developmental perspective the project has shown the holistic benefit of channeling resources, both informational and social, into small communities. In my opinion donors and funders, to date, are not placing enough focus on resources at the micro-level. Instead of donating and providing resources in large contractual packages they should rather channel funds in smaller quantities over far longer periods of time. This has been the case with the *Siyazama* Project, albeit small scale but of long term duration, and has shown its strength and performance sufficiently well as a model for other small communities. This procedure clearly provided a charge of energy into the women's groups, as it focused long term on imprinting the makers with health information and education. The regularly held workshops and meetings provided the group with a cohesive and collaborative consciousness which placed high value on product design, design exploration and the generation and transmission of new ideas.

Overall, the study has revealed the screened chasm and gaps that exist for meeting the health needs of poor communities in South Africa and more

emphatically in KwaZulu-Natal. Glaring deficits are required to be filled in the public health care sector. This, coupled with the non-availability of governmental social grants when CD4 counts are deemed too high when AIDS patients are exhibiting opportunistic diseases, clearly translates into a predictably critical situation for poor communities in South Africa (Nattrass 2004; Leclerc-Madlala 2005). In South Africa today some of the health care needs that require urgent attention are health care expectation, health care reception, health care understanding, and methods of health care information dispersal. It is my belief that visual communication can play a vital role in communities struggling to have these needs met. Visual communicative methodologies such as those employed in the *Siyazama* Project represent culturally sensitive and traditionally resonant forms of engaging with people and are potentially capable of effectively transmitting powerful and important health messages. The challenge, in my opinion, is to fully realize the extent to which this valuable characteristic of traditional craft making can be exploited as a health-messaging tool.

In closing, and as a tribute to the women of *Siyazama*, I would like to thank them for their significant and enduring efforts in craft making which they have boldly, passionately and relentlessly produced over the past ten years. The statement below from *The Songlines*⁴, aptly describes that tenacity.

“When I rest my feet my mind also ceases to function”, J.G. Hamann (cited in Songlines 1998:248)

CHAPTER SEVEN NOTES

1. The term ‘Dolls with Jobs’ was seen in The Witness newspaper article headline dated 9 November 2005 which interviewed the craftswomen and discussed the work of the *Siyazama* Project study. The author of the article is Kobie Venter.

2. For further information on the international 'Men as part of prevention against HIV/AIDS' debate go to <http://list.healthnet.org/mailman/listinfo/hnn-chat> (accessed 31 May 2006)
3. In October 2006 a funding bid put to the United Kingdom's Department of International Development (DfID) under the England and Africa Project (EAP) fund was approved. This bid, totaling R1.5m, was designed by three Universities under the leadership of Professor Jackie Guille (United Kingdom), Kate Wells and Professor Ian Sutherland (South Africa), Bruno Sserenkuumo and Venny Nakazibwe (Makerere University, Uganda). The intention of this new EAP is to link three Universities namely the Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa, the University of Newcastle/ Northumbria, United Kingdom and Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. This collaboration will trial the *Siyazama* Project methodologies with a group of traditional craftspeople in rural Uganda, while in rural South Africa, the Makerere University developed principle of student internships will be trialled.
4. The Songlines, a book by Bruce Chatwin, was the first novel I read at the outset of my PhD study. It was recommended to me by Professor E. Siennaert of the University of Cape Town. Chatwin describes the "songlines as invisible pathways connecting up all over Australia: ancient tracks made of songs which tell of the creation of the land" (David Sexton of the Sunday Telegraph 1998). This author poignantly and beautifully describes another culture, and the book has proved to be a valuable ethnographic and anthropologic resource throughout the duration of my study.

APPENDIX 1 CRAFT GENRE CHECKLIST

Genre	Creator	Workshop
Beadwork		
Beaded AIDS pin ' <i>umamphapheni</i> '	Celani Njoyeza	1
Beaded cloth sculpture Unsafe Sex A	Gabi Gabi Nzama	1
Telephone wire weaving <i>imbenge</i>		
HIV Kills	Unknown	1
AIDS kills	Unknown	1
The Clinic	Unknown	1
Aids Kills	Unknown	1
<i>Imbenge</i> with AIDS message	Unknown	1
<i>Imbenge</i> with AIDS message	Unknown	1
Sarah's <i>imbenge</i>	Sarah Fikile Ndlovu	8
Beaded Cloth		
<i>Lempi Yalwa</i> ngo 1906	Fokosile Ngema	1
<i>Isikhonyane</i> The Locust plague	Fokosile Ngema	5
Beaded jewellery		
HIV Necklace	Lobolile Ximba	1
I am very tired	Beauty Ndlovu	1
<i>Izameni</i> We must try	Unknown	1
<i>Ziphi izinnyango</i> Where are the healers?	Unknown	1
Woman with AIDS	Beauty Ndlovu	1
<i>Vikela</i> You saved me	Unknown	1
AIDS message	Unknown	1
AIDS Message	Lobolile Ximba	1
Repetitive AIDS symbols	Unknown	1
AIDS message	Unknown	1
Beaded Cloth Doll		
Isangoma	Lobolile Ximba	1
Isangoma doll	Lobolile Ximba	1
Young Bride	Lobolile Ximba	1
Young Married Woman With A Baby	Lobolile Ximba	1
Breastfeeding Mother	Beauty Ndlovu	1
<i>Safa</i> we are suffering	Fokosile Ngema	1
<i>Amadlosi</i> Ancestor	Celani Njoyeza	1
Stealing A Baby A+B	Celani Njoyeza	2
The Old Lady with Walking Stick	Zanele Shangaze	2
The Twins	Lobolile Ximba	2
<i>Izintandane</i> AIDS orphans / girl and boy	Tholiwe Sitole	3
AIDS orphans	Bonangani Ximba	3
AIDS Angel	Bonangani Ximba	3
AIDS Angel	Tholiwe Sitole	3
Betrothed Angel	Tholiwe Sitole	7
Shembe <i>Makoti</i>	Khishwepi Sitole	8
Green Makoti	Tholiwe Sitole	8
Two very large <i>makoti</i> dolls	Lobolile Ximba, Bonagani Ximba, Fokosile Ngema, Sbongile Ngema	8

Beaded Cloth Animals		
The Snake	Jabu Mchunu	1
Bird	Linah Shelembe	1
Giraffe	Gcinani Mchunu	1
Beautiful Cow	Jabu Mchunu	1
Beaded Cloth tableau		
'Ukubethela' Buying Life	Gabi Gabi Nzama	1
Fresh Food for the Elderly HIV Infected	Beauty Ndlovu	1
Childbirth Scene	Celani Njoyeza	1
Witchdoctor Making Magical Brew	Zanele Shangaze	1
Umpundulu Bird	Celani Njoyeza	2
Unsafe Sex B/ Rape and Healer	Gabi Gabi Nzama	2
Lady Giving Birth	Celani Njoyeza	2
<i>Izangoma</i> in Training	Beauty Ndlovu	2
Sexual Harassment	Gabi Gabi Nzama	3
The Coffin Story	Celani Njoyeza	3
Snake Story	Celani Njoyeza	3
Enema Story	Beauty Ndlovu	3
Animal tower	Beauty Ndlovu	3
Human Tower	Beauty Ndlovu	6
Umpundulu Bird	Celani Njoyeza	2
Rape at the Hands of a Healer	Gabi Gabi Nzama	8
Couple in Bed	Gabi Gabi Nzama	8
Rape of Children	Celani Njoyeza	8
Beaded Cloth sculpture		
Unsafe Sex A	Gabi Gabi Nzama	1
Women crucified to AIDS	Lobolile Ximba	2
The Coffin Story	Celani Njoyeza	3
Snake Story	Celani Njoyeza	3
Enema Story	Beauty Ndlovu	3
Baby Girl on Cross	Tholiwe Sitole	5
Child figure and the pills	Khishwepi Sitole	5
Girl on the Cross	Tholiwe Sitole	5
Man on the Cross	Khishwepi Sitole	8
Young Man on the Cross	Lobolile Ximba	8
Jesus Cross	Tholiwe Sitole	8

APPENDIX 2 THE EXPRESSION OF *SIYAZAMA*

This appendix consists of a detailed account of the three dimensional beaded sculptures, and records the meta information including the women's own stories as they have told them through indepth interviews. Each artifact is described under the following subheadings; title, craft genre, creator, area of residence, date, workshop/subject, materials, colours, size, photographer, and language. The story, as told by the each creator of the craft artifact, concludes each input.

The appendix is divided chronologically in accordance with the various classificatory workshops each of which, in turn, followed a specific pathway. This pathway was, in most cases, dictated by the verbal and non-verbal responses by the rural women to the information they were receiving and this, as a distinct methodology within the intervention, directed the programme with its information focus and content.

The following list features the meta information from seventy significant craft artifacts each of which resulted from one of the specific *Siyazama* Project workshops hosted between 1999 and 2005.

WORKSHOP 1. 1999/2001: Twelve beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education (awareness, prevention, myths, taboos, nutrition, caring for the sick).

WORKSHOP 2. 2001: Five workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness (magical and supernatural beliefs, remembering the dead, caring for the youth, nutrition).

WORKSHOP 3. 2002: Five workshops in First AID for AIDS (Practical First AID for AIDS patients).

WORKSHOP 4. 2003: *Siyazama* Project goes on exhibition at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture at Middlesex University, London, UK for three months.

WORKSHOP 5. 2003/4: Six workshops on Anti-retroviral Therapies (ARTs) with trainers from Ithembalabantu Clinic in Umlazi, Durban.

WORKSHOP 6. 2003/4: World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Siyazama* Project hosts design workshops for scaling up production purposes.

WORKSHOP 7. 2004: Five HIV/AIDS Reflective workshops and Development of new collection for Michigan State University Museum Collection.

WORKSHOP 8. 2004/5: Five Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection.

WORKSHOP 1:1999/2001 Twelve beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education (awareness, prevention, myths, taboos, nutrition, caring for the sick)



Title: Beaded AIDS pin '*umamphapheni*'

Craft Genre: Beadwork

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: KwaNyuswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1: (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, metal safety-pin

Colours: Turquoise background with red AIDS logo. Silver pin.

Size: 4cm X 2.4cm

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: As a square of decorative beadwork fabric hung onto a safety-pin, this well known Zulu 'love letter' has often been described as *izincwadi yokuthanda* or *ubala abuyise* which means 'one writes in order that the other should reply'.

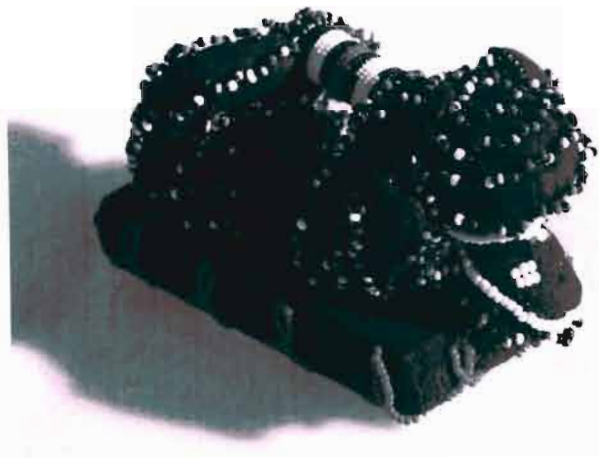
"I use the AIDS logo to symbolize my knowledge about HIV/AIDS. It's a message of life and death '*imibiko yokufa nokuphila*' "(personal communication with Celani Njoyeza, November 2005). Numerous different versions of this beaded pin have been produced throughout the duration of the project. To begin with, and at the outset of the intervention, most of the craftswomen strictly applied the red and white colour formula appropriate to the HIV/AIDS ribbon. It did not take long before I found them experimenting with red and other colour mix combinations. When asked if this change in colouration meant anything Celani's response was "We know what it means now, so now we can make it (the AIDS red ribbon logo) fashionable."

The geometric and angular shape of the AIDS logo¹ was originated in the *Siyazama* project in 1999 to differentiate it from other beaded AIDS logos which mostly had a more rounded look. These more rounded logos were closely following the fabric AIDS ribbon logo which was first worn by actor Jeremy Irons in the United Kingdom when he attended an AIDS benefit ball.

In the project workshops, posters displaying the geometric AIDS logo were shown, and all were encouraged to purposely adhere to this new shape knowing it would be easier to track as a design pathway as the project progressed through the early stages. This has proven to be a most successful form of branding and project identification.

NOTE:

1. It is claimed that the red ribbon logo was created in New York in 1991 by the Visual AIDS Artists Caucus as symbol to invoke compassion for people living with AIDS. The group, inspired by the yellow ribbons, honouring soldiers at war, chose red to symbolize blood, passion, anger and love. www://Info.gov.hk/aids/rrc/English/the_redribbon.htm (accessed 18 May 2006)



Title: Unsafe Sex A

Craft Genre: Beaded cloth sculpture

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread, wooden base.

Colours: Black, red and white

Size: 16cms x 10cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Gabi Gabi tells the story as such: "The man knows that he has AIDS, and has not told his partner. He is not practicing safe sex since he is not using a condom, and thus is knowingly infecting her with AIDS."

The use of black, white and red beads is typical of this regional style, as is the accessorizing of multi-coloured linear stranded loops of the small glass beads. The two figures, each with tightly bound encircled strands of beadwork at the waistline, are tightly intertwined sexually, physically and emotionally. On closer inspection the intimate details of the male genitalia are vividly evident.

To Gabi Gabi this is a personal reflection of her own life and how she avoided becoming an AIDS victim through the timely death of her husband, who was a

practicing *isangoma*. This tableau reflects “where everything began. My husband had an affair. He was sleeping with his mistress in my own house.” Although he had AIDS he did not tell anybody. According to her, she was “given a second chance” after his passing, when his brother who wanted to have her as his rightful wife, also died from AIDS soon afterwards.

This most unusual and explicit tableau that was presented to me in the early stages of the *Siyazama* workshop schedules certainly defined for all participants the reality of the serious and life threatening problems which most rural women face in KwaZulu-Natal: in a time of HIV/AIDS.



Title: Virginity Testing

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, cotton thread, wooden base.

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 20cms x 11 cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

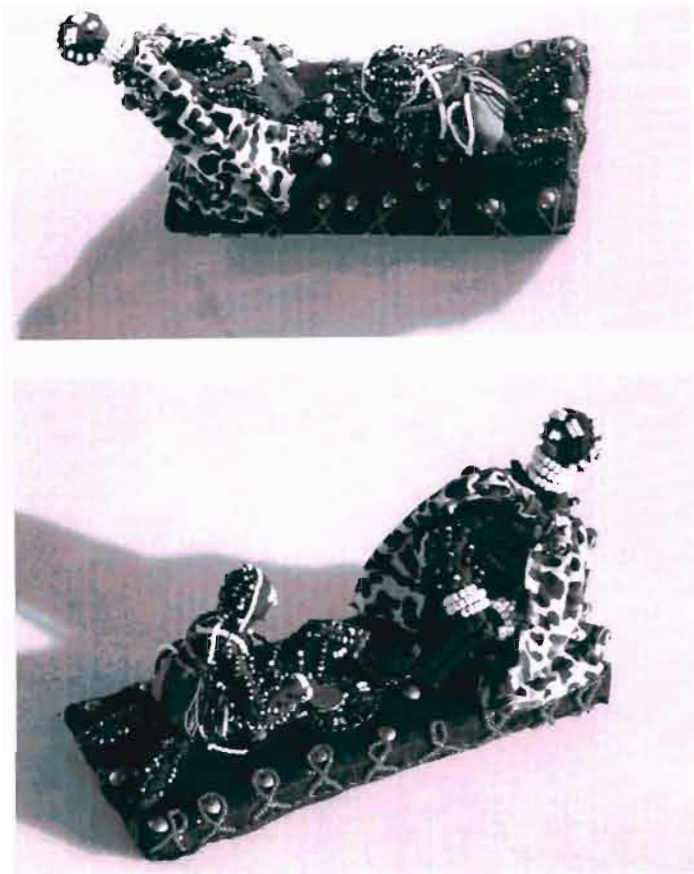
Description/Story: According to Beauty Ndlovu the story is such: “Mothers are checking girls to see if they are still virgins. They realize that, in a rural community, if you are a virgin, you are safe from AIDS.”

The three figures, comprising a young girl, her mother and the virginity ‘testor’, are all made from tightly bound rolls of fabric. Arranged on a flat base these forms are accessorized with colourful beadwork appropriate to their age set, ranking and region of residence. The young girl is lying spread eagled on the ground, her legs wide apart, with the ‘testor’ leaning over to check her virginity status. Her vagina is clearly indicated by a red fabric slit peeping through the outer fabric covering. The ‘testor’ is checking to see if her hymen is intact as the mother waits expectantly. She is hoping to get good news.

Beauty has made several versions of this tableau and believes that this type of tradition and its revival could benefit the young Zulu population¹. Virginity is highly prized among the Zulu (Wells 2004: 85) and most of the *Siyazama* project craftswomen claim to adhere to its rituals and customs².

Notes:

1. For more contextualizing information on virginity testing and the implications thereof with the South African rape statistics being unceremoniously the highest in the world, see the work of Leclerc-Madlala Leclerc-Madlala, S. 2002. *On the virgin cleansing myth: Gendered bodies, AIDS and ethnomedicine*, African Journal of AIDS Research (pp1:87-95). South Africa.
2. See Wells, Sienaert, and Conolly 2004. *The Siyazama Project: A Traditional Beadwork and AIDS Intervention Program*, Design Issues, 20(2 Spring):73-89



Title: 'Ukubethela' Buying Life

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, coin, *imphepho*, metal upholstery studs, razor blade.

Colours: Mainly red, white and black.

Size: 22cms x 9cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Gabi Gabi as creator of this tableau describes it as such: "The *isangoma*, a man, has a razor blade and the woman has a chicken which she is beginning to slaughter. At this stage they have both started to get sick (with HIV) and they try to make themselves strong by slaughtering or sacrificing the animal to the ancestors. This is to try to prevent them from dying. In short they are buying their lives which is called *ukubethela*."

This tableau is surrounded with red beaded AIDS ribbons signifying a very close affinity with the disease. The two figures face each other directly and the green velvet chicken, as a token of sacrifice, is poised to face the *isangoma*. A small bundle of *imphepho* and a silver coin lie at the feet of the *isangoma*, who is shrouded by an animal skin printed cape. Clearly demarcated on his back is the outline of a crucifix which has been carefully stitched and embroidered onto the animal print. He distortedly has an enlarged erect penis sticking out from under his cape which has a prominent circle of red beads at its tip.

I questioned Gabi Gabi about the penis and its relevance in this tableau and she remarked that the "red beads signify exactly where the AIDS is."



Title: Fresh Food for the Elderly HIV Infected

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Camperdown, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, cotton fabric, brass bells, thread, wooden base.

Size: 15cms x 10cms

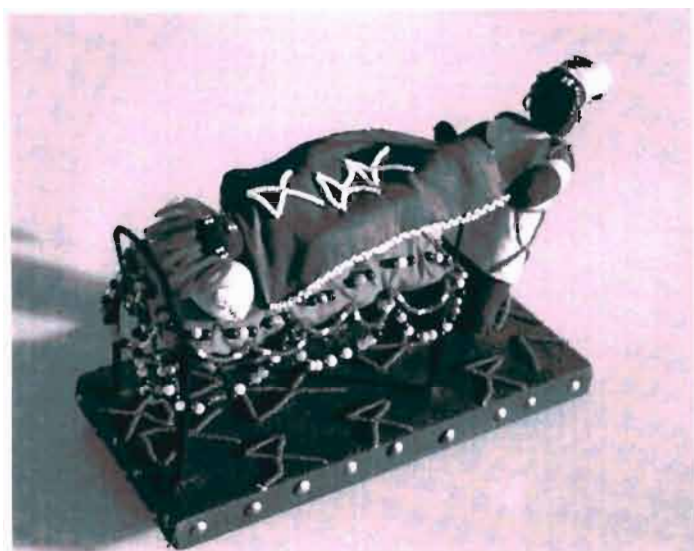
Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Beauty tells the story as thus: "People did not realize that even if you are elderly that you could get AIDS. The grandmother got infected with AIDS when she was looking after her daughter. She did not use gloves. Her son's bride comes and gives her mother-in-law fruits. In this tableau the young girl is (depicted as) bringing the older woman, who is weak from AIDS, some fresh fruit as she knows that fresh fruit and vegetables will be good for her."

This tableau has created a tension between the two figures as they expectantly look directly at each other. It also clearly defines the difference in dress as the signifying factor in age set clarity. The older lady is sitting typically on the ground as the younger woman leans forward to hand her a tray of fruit. The tray and contents are fully beaded. The style of beadwork is typical of the Valley of a Thousand Hills and Camperdown region.

This tableau is the result of discussions which were held on health and nutrition for the HIV infected and it describes how Beauty feels the elderly, who are HIV infected, should be treated. Many of the craftswomen, at this early stage of the programme, spoke out about the elderly are often being ridiculed, treated badly and laughed at once their HIV positive status is "out." In complete contrast, most responded that with HIV it seems that the younger you are the more sympathy one can expect from family, friends and the community.



Title: Childbirth Scene

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education and awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, wire, thread, wool, wooden base.

Colours: Multi-coloured predominantly blue

Size: 17cms x 11cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

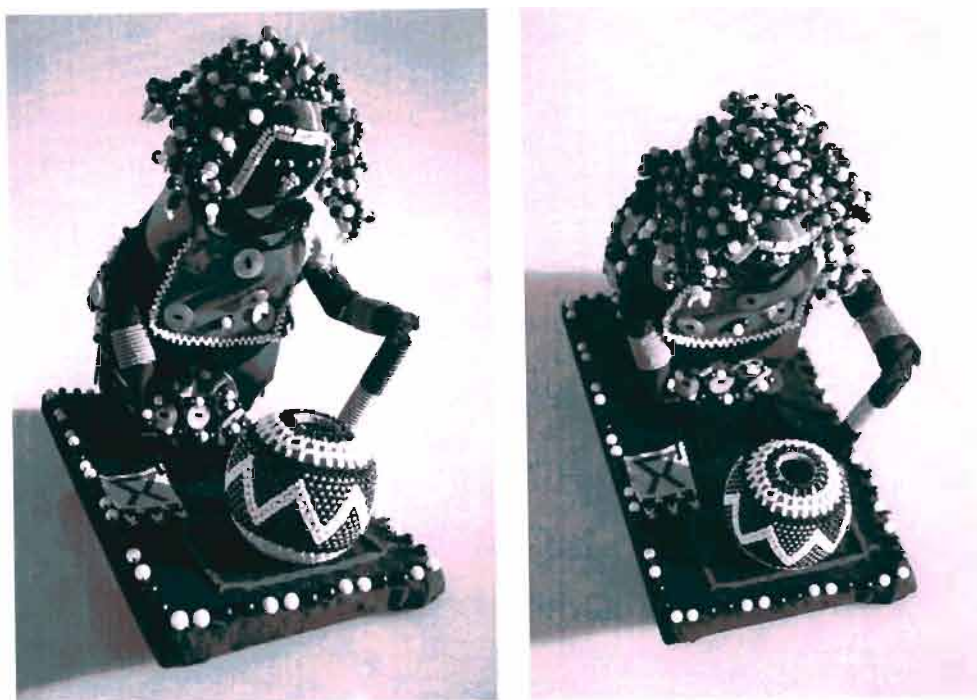
Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Celani describes the tableau as "The woman is giving birth on a bed, attended by a nurse" The story, according to Celani, is thus:

“At the Mbeka clinic in the Ndwedwe area, one of her pregnant relatives has more pain than normal, so the women attending her took her to the clinic. Normal childbirth takes place in the home so this was unusual. The women decided to take her there as the pregnant woman had no power due to the fact that she was HIV positive. At the clinic they gave her an injection to give her power and to help subdue the pain. She still had no power, so is about to have a caesarian section to get the baby out.”

Celani continues her story with “The nurse tries to help her. The (baby’s) head is already out but she cannot push any further. The child ends up dying because our children are not listening to us. If she had listened she would not have come back with AIDS.”

This tableau features a predominant hospital bed with a nurse, injection needle in hand, standing at the base of the bed. The patient, the birthing mother, is lying on the bed. The loose bed cover can be lifted to reveal the emerging head of the baby as the mother attempts to give birth. The AIDS logo is strongly featured as a warning to others.



Title: Witchdoctor Making Magical Brew

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Zanele Shangaze

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, plastic beads, thread, fabric, *iselwa* gourd, wooden base.

Colours: Multicoloured

Size: 24cms x 10cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Zanele Shangaze her tableau depicts a “witchdoctor who is mixing up a special mixture to help people who have AIDS as she believes this will cure them.” Zanele’s concern is with the “witchdoctors”, as agents of the *abathakathi*¹, who may be inappropriately mixing up remedies for AIDS sufferers and charging them exorbitantly large amounts of money for her so-called “cures.”

Witches are deemed to have a preoccupation to annihilate (Berglund 1976:268) and it is most unlikely that people would speak much of *abathakathi*. As to speak of them “too much” might raise concern and suspicion. Notwithstanding Zanele has attempted to circumvent this notion by explaining that the witch depicted in this tableau is only “posing as a healer.”

In this tableau the witch who is outwardly dressed as a healer *isangoma* leans over the beaded gourd *iselwa*, which resembles a beer pot *ukhumba*, as she mixes the *imuthi* for the patients. Her beaded hair is full of multi-coloured plastic beads and my informant explained that this witch is actively training others in her evil craft.

Zanele has used a beadwork style which is definitively of the Valley of a Thousand Hills region and this can be recognized both through beadwork stitch and colours chosen.

NOTES:

1. Berglund (1976:266) notes that “the Zulu idiom *ubuthakathi* implies two fields of evil. Firstly, it refers to an incarnate power geared towards harm and destruction which manifests itself through humans and, either directly or indirectly, is addressed to fellow human beings. The manipulators of *ubuthakathi* are termed *abathakathi*. Equipped with power of *ubuthakathi* they are criminality personified. They and their powers are mysterious in that nobody can give an appreciable (from the Zulu point of view) explanation of their frightful abilities and malicious exercises.” He further qualifies the unquestionable reality of *abathakathi* with “*Abathakathi* and their power of *ubuthakathi* are very much a reality and nothing pertaining to them and their evil is doubted or denied. They are real in an undisputable sense.”



Title: Isangoma

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, grass mat, seeds, goats tail tuft, wool.

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 17cms X 10cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Lobolile the story of this tableau is such "The *isangoma* is telling the patients that they are HIV positive. She is telling them the truth and not just saying they are ill because they have been targeted or bewitched by bad spells put on them by others. Some *isangomas* say people are ill because of bewitching, but this one is telling the truth."

The beadwork is simple yet heralds complex geometry, encompassing the AIDS red ribbon logo, which is embedded into the conical form of the doll. The *isangoma's* hairpiece *nqothela* depicts not only her unmarried status but

shows that she has a boyfriend and is likely to be betrothed. She is sitting on a small grass mat *isicqephu*.

This *isangoma* tableau depicts a kneeling *isangoma* actively holding her black switch *ishoba lengoma* as if in dignified communion with the *amadlosi* ancestors. Berglund (1976:184) explains that the *ishoba lengoma* is often made from the tail of a slaughtered goat or cow sacrificed for ritual celebrations. Claiming that they “ought to be wholly black or wholly white”, it is the amount of white beads attached which provides the switch with its individuality. White beads are part of the *isangoma*’s initiation and these are generally added over a period of years. White is always associated with the colour of the shades (*amadlosi*) and therefore white beads will “show up’ well against the black tail hairs. Berglund’s respondents claimed that there is no meaning difference between a white switch and a black switch as long as “they are uniform.”

When I asked my *isangoma* respondent Agnes Xaba (personal communication 26 May 2006) what the difference is, in her opinion, between black and white tufts of hair in the switch she claimed that there is indeed a powerful difference. The pure black switch which she referred to as being “hard and strong” is specifically for “talking straight to the *amadlosi*.” She emphasized the *hardness* of this switch by gesticulating, pointing to the ground and clasping her hands together. With this switch there is no God or Jesus to talk to “first.” She explained how different the white switch is. As a she personally uses the white switch she told of how she can speak directly to both Jesus and the *amadlosi* simultaneously. She also explained how she keeps her white switch under her arm for warmth especially when she is “talking to Jesus.” It is important to keep the white switch warm and comforted. As far as beadwork on the switch is concerned she offered that “any colour” of beads are acceptable but she later made of point of mentioning black, white and red colour beads as mandatory colours.



Title: Isangoma doll

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, goats skin, seed beads, snake bones, small gourd *iselwa*

Colours: Traditional Msinga colour system *isishunka*¹

Size: 14cms x 8cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Lobolile this tableau depicts the following:
“The *isangoma* is reading the bones for a patient. Unfortunately the *isangoma* sees evidence of AIDS in the bones and tells the patient the truth.”

When asked to explain the *isangoma* accessories Lobolile responded with “as for the *isangoma* the only difference is that she wears a different skirt

especially for *izangoma*'s called *unomndindi*." She went on to report that "*isangoma*'s throw the bones to communicate with the *amadlosi* and mix *imuthi* for their patients. This practice is termed *iqobongo*. The novice *isangoma*'s, those who are in training, are called *itwasa*.

The prolific use of the grey seed beads *imfibinga* is testimony to the constant communication through dreams to the *amadlosi*. As this is the prime role of the *isangoma* these beads are heralded as "helping the ancestors to come quickly in dreams." In other words they powerfully assist with getting the *amadlosi* into quick communication. If, for example, one does not dream then these beads will help. The *isangoma* often wears them crossed over the chest. A further benefit of the *imfibinga* is their ability to assist with teething problems. They are worn during pregnancy around the "middle" to ward off later problems with teething. They are also helpful to "strengthen the baby in the womb."

NOTES:

1. Jolles, in his publication *Traditional Zulu Beadwork of the Msinga Area African Arts* 1993(January):42-53 describes four of the 'old style' beadwork colour schemes that were used by the Msinga craftswomen. *Isishunka* as a scheme can be recognized to include specific seven colours, and according to his article, he classifies this scheme as "one of the most complex" (1993:44)



Title: Young Bride

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 1999

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, various textiles, corrugated cardboard, wool, metal studs, takkies.

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 75cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Lobolile claims the following story "to be true" as it talks of a real situation which she has personally experienced: "The problem that this new bride is facing is that someone in her new family now has AIDS. She is now worried whether she has married into the wrong family." A further fear is: "She is also worried that she may contract HIV as her husband works in Johannesburg and he has slept with other women and may have passed AIDS onto her. She is very worried about herself and her unborn child."

Lobolile is concerned with a number of issues in this story as they apply to most rural women in KwaZulu-Natal.

This traditional doll has a knitted jersey fabric covering and is circumvented by the waistband *imfacane* which *is* typical of the traditional look which would often encompass studs. According to Lobolie “the difference between the virgin and the married woman is that the virgin wears a towel (over her shoulders) and the married woman wears a shawl, combined with the headgear *isichola* and a leather skirt *usdwaba*.” Both of these items are seen in this large doll. Her shoes *isicathula* are typical footgear for the traditional women of Msinga.



Title: Young Married Woman with a Baby

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, grass mat, metal studs, wool and fabric

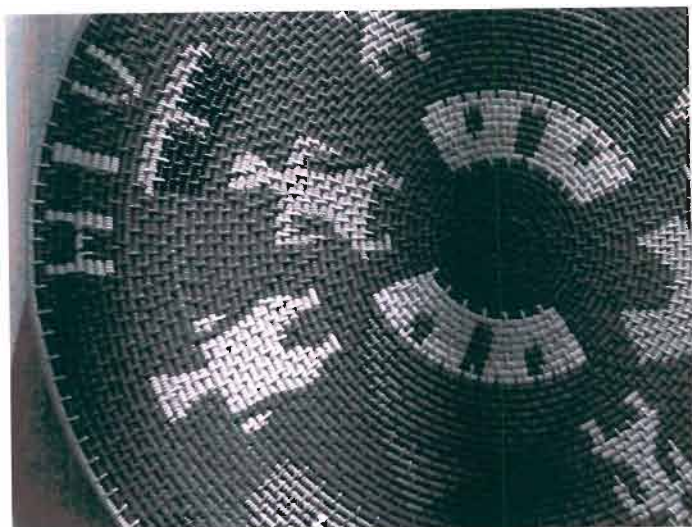
Size: 15cms x 9cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Lobolile this tableau depicts two interlinked stories which she adamantly claims as being "a true story." The description is such "This is a young married woman, a young bride, with a baby. She is HIV positive but the child is negative. She is worried that when she dies, who will look after her child?" Complicating this fear Lobolile relates of further concerns that the young bride is dealing with. "She has been invited to a party and has got all dressed up. Her husband is also going and she is worried that her husband will fall in love with someone new at the party. She is worried about her safety and that of her children. The husband has a history of sleeping with other women at these parties and cannot be trusted."

Lobolile recounts a fear which many married women in rural KwaZulu-Natal are dealing with. Her bead colours are largely traditional Msinga and are in the *isishunka* scheme. Her large *makoti isicholo* depicts her proud married status and her skirt is frilled with the short fringe *udidla* made of black wool and is typical of the Msinga doll makers practice. The mother sits on a grass mat *uncansi*.



Title: HIV Kills

Craft Genre: Telephone wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

Colours: red, grey and yellow

Size: diameter 26cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: In the *Siyazama* Project workshops this particular group, in unison, claimed that “AIDS education should take place in the home.” To this end most of the baskets had homes, hospitals and clinics as architectural structures depicted in their design. It was also seen as important to show both genders in each *imbenge*. For the first time in the project the freshly dug grave mound with a crucifix form on it appeared. This was deemed necessary to show that with AIDS there is no survival and that the message clearly embellished in this *imbenge* speaks for itself.



Title: AIDS kills

Craft Genre: Telephone Wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

Colours: White, red and orange

Size: diameter 24cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This *imbenge*'s message is clear. As one of the simplest in design and colouration, the geometry employed in the execution of this basket design undoubtedly displays a mathematical ability.

The design grows out from the centre, and according to my informants, is never planned beforehand. It simply "comes out" as the basket grows.



Title: The Clinic

Craft Genre: Telephone Wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

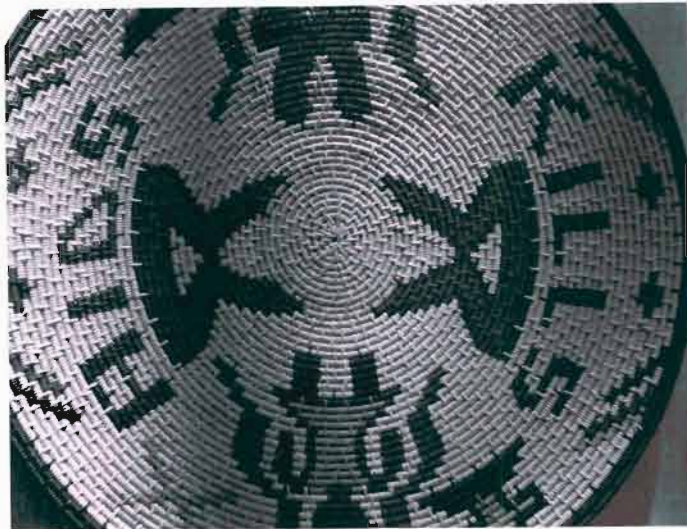
Colours: Grey, black, turquoise and blue

Size: diameter 23cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This *imbenge* shows male and female figures surrounded by grave mounds, crucifixes and AIDS symbols. The word 'Clinic' is clearly indicated as this is regarded as a place of sanctity and respite for the AIDS infected.



Title: Aids Kills

Craft Genre: telephone Wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

Colours: White, red, black, blue

Size: diameter 20cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This *imbenge* features the male and female figures on opposing sides of the *imbenge*. Between them are the two large AIDS symbols. Also depicted are symbols of graves and crucifixes.



Title: *Imbenge* with AIDS message

Craft Genre: Telephone Wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

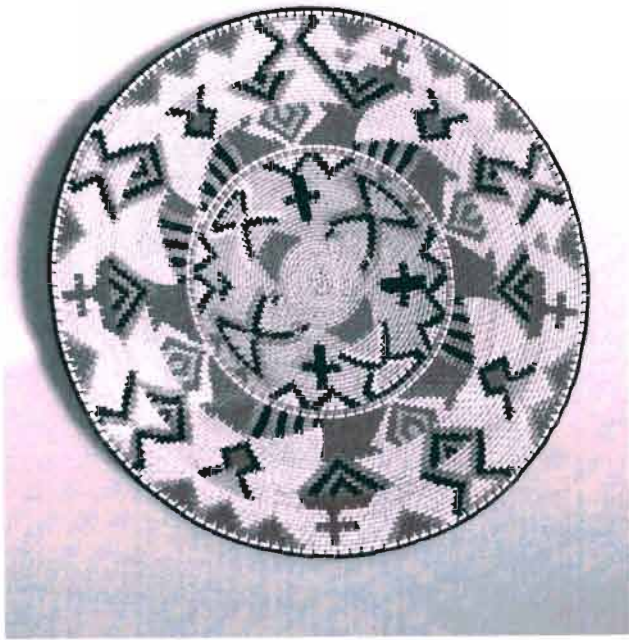
Colours: Orange, black, white, blue

Size: diameter 20cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This symbolic *imbenge* depicts the notion that "AIDS education must take place in the home." The normality of the homely situation is further implied through the inclusion of two animals on either side of the shape.



Title: *Imbenge* with AIDS message

Craft Genre: Telephone Wire weaving *imbenge*

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: telephone wire, galvanized wire

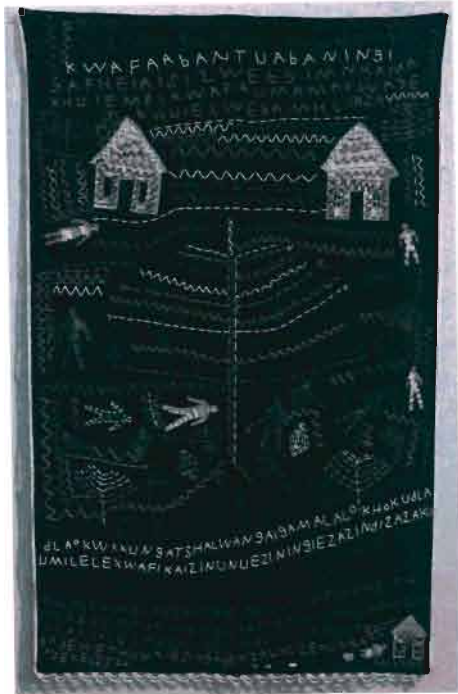
Colours: White, black, yellow, green

Size: diameter 35cms

Photographer: Kate Wells

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: The design for this large *imbenge* was inspired by a range of traditional beadwork images from the Nongoma, KwaZulu-Natal region. These were displayed as large posters purely to inspire and enthrall, and were subsequently employed into the designs of the *imbenge*'s. One can see reference to this work in the chevron stripe design which circumvents this *imbenge*.



Title: *Lempi Yalwa ngo* 1906

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth

Creator: Fokosile Ngema

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 1meter x 70cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Fokosile refers to her large beaded and cloth as '*lempi yalwa*' or 'year of the war'. She claims she is reminded of the 'Year of the War 1906' *Bhambatha ka Manciza Zondi*, also known as Bhambatha Rebellion, which was one of the most tragic episodes in KwaZulu-Natal's military history¹. In her complex cloth she also talks of the Locust plague as she attempts to reinvent these disastrous humanitarian situations. In the war Fokosile remembers that "people were being slaughtered mercilessly but more care and emphasis was placed on them once they were dead." Her illustration depicts bodies being pulled into shelter, and out of the sun. Being

left in the sun tended to lead to extreme bloating of corpses and made moving them for burial very difficult. Her work shows bodies of the Zulu warriors being placed in the cool shade under the leafy branches of a big tree in the centre of her cloth. Their shields are lying scattered around them.

By showing this she claims she is attempting to impart the notion that AIDS is still considered to be a highly embarrassing illness in her rural area. People with AIDS are often left alone to suffer. Yet, she reports that once the AIDS patient has passed away there is an outpouring of emotion, care and reflection on the dead person. In other words, they are recipients of more attention and affection once they have passed away.

Fokosile makes the connection between this war that she remembers (she was told about it as a child) and the alarming death rate due to AIDS in rural areas in which bodies are being buried in unprecedented amounts. She claims that the “rate of death is alarming and most especially for women.”

In the bottom far right corner she has shown a female figure lying outside of her hut. Fokosile poignantly makes the point “that the pills have arrived too late to save the woman.”

The medium of beading onto cloth was taught to the rural women in a series of workshops held at the African Art Centre in 2001. This new medium appealed in particular to Fokosile who used the technique of her own accord in the *Siyazama* Project. To create this cloth Fokosile, who is unable to read or write in Zulu, requested of a local schoolchild to write her story, as she related it, into an exercise book. Fokosile copied this notation directly onto her cloth using beads and thread as her medium to inscribe. She disregarded all the grammatical inclusions such as spaces, commas and full stops with the result that the story line continues unabated. Fokosile has continued to reproduce these beaded cloths with the result that some of her most special cloths have found places in international collections.

NOTES:

1. For more historical information on the Bhambatha Rebellion in KwaZulu-Natal see *The Illustrated History of South Africa* (Eds.) Dougie Oakes (1995:286)



Title: HIV Necklace

Craft Genre: Beaded jewellery

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, buttons, thread

Colours: Red, black, navy blue, white

Size: 10cms x 5cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Beaded necklace inscribed with the acronym HIV and showing Msinga beadwork style and colour.



Title: I am very tired

Craft Genre: Beaded jewellery

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: Red, black, white

Size: 10cms x 6cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This necklace talks of the overarching tiredness and general lack of energy that envelope the AIDS patient. She has used the Valley of a Thousand Hills typical regional fringing to complete her necklace.



Title: *Izameni* We must try

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 12cms x 9cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: *Izameni* which means 'we must try' is the piece of jewellery which provided the project with its name *Siyazama*. The craftswomen all agreed that they were willing to "try" their best in this new phase of their lives.



Title: *Ziphi izinnyango* Where are the healers?

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: Multicoloured

Size: 11cms x 9cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This piece of beaded jewellery poignantly asks 'where are the healers?' It is undertaken in the Valley of a Thousand Hills style and is completed with a buttons clasp.



Title: Woman with AIDS

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: Blue, black, red and white

Size: 18cms x 39cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Beauty has creatively made the connection between the AIDS symbol and the form of the female figure. This piece of beadwork is regionally specific to the Valley of a Thousand Hills region.



Title: *Vikela* You saved me

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread

Size: 16cms X 10cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This piece of beadwork has a warning to 'keep safe' and 'be saved' and to avoid becoming HIV infected. It is regionally specific beadwork from the Valley of a Thousand Hills region.



Title: AIDS message

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: White with highlights of red, blue and grey

Size: 15cms x 39cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This beadwork shows an imaginative approach and the levels of geometry which can be attained in beadwork design. It displays regularity, balance and rhythm in both colour and design. The specific regional origin of this style is the Valley of a Thousand Hills area.



Title: AIDS Message

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread

Colours: White, red, black

Size: 14cms x 9cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Lobolile has used the Number 2 glass bead size in the making of this neckpiece. Displaying high levels of geometry and balance this beadwork is specifically of the Msinga style.



Title: Repetitive AIDS symbols

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, string

Colours: White, red

Size: 30cms x 3.5cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This neckpiece clearly shows a repetitive design when alternating directions of the AIDS logo. It is finished with string cords at either end to secure and is specifically of the Valley of a Thousand Hills region in origin and beadwork style.



Title: AIDS message

Craft Genre: Beaded Jewellery

Creator: Unknown

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, buttons

Colours: Green, black and white

Size: 10cms x 6.5cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This neckpiece displays, once again, highly original design which shows balance, rhythm and harmony in both design and colour. It is of the Valley of a Thousand Hills regional style.



Title: Breastfeeding Mother

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, wire, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 19cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Beauty the story of this doll is thus: "The mother is going to the clinic with the child. The child is hungry so the mother feeds the baby. She knows that it's the right thing to do even if you are HIV positive."

Beauty was inspired by the presentation given by Professor Anna Coutsadis of the Nelson Mandela Medical School at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2000 at the *Siyazama* Project workshops. Based on research undertaken through the University of KwaZulu-Natal, HIV positive mothers are

encouraged to 'exclusively' breastfeed in KwaZulu-Natal. This means that they should not introduce any other type of feed at all for the full six months, not even water. At six months the baby must be dramatically weaned.

Beauty is attempting to recreate this situation with her breastfeeding tableau which proudly shows the mother's breasts visibly evident. The mother is attired in regionally specific beadwork and accessories.



Title: *Safa* we are suffering

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Fokosile Ngema

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, cardboard, metal studs, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 35cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Fokosile the story of this doll is thus: "The doll is a mother living with HIV and now she is telling the community that she has AIDS and that she needs a lot of help and protection. The married women are all telling their friends that to be married is dangerous in the face of AIDS. You may get it."

The doll is a married woman which is seen by the use of her red *makoti isicholo* headgear and her prized leather skirt *usdwaba*. *SAFA* means 'we are suffering' due to AIDS. The doll is identifiably of the Msinga region of origin by her beadwork and accessorizing. .

Early on in the *Siyazama* project the rural women declared that to be married was problem which they all feared. From this point onwards they became acutely aware of their predicament and continued to reproduce numerous 'married women' dolls in abundance.



Title: *Amadlozi* Ancestor

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, wire frame

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 24cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

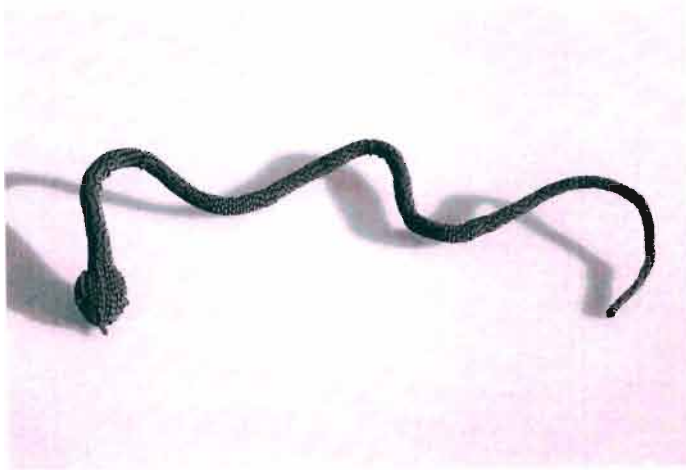
Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Celani made this *amadlozi* doll as a suggestion as to how an *amadlozi* might look. He is very tall and thin and has big shapely shoes on his feet. He wears a short beaded front apron *isinene* which according to Krige (cited in Dell 1998:105) consists of a "front apron of tails or a piece of skin cut into strips which used to be given by a father to a boy on reaching puberty, and a back apron of soft skin *ibeshu* to cover the buttocks."

Beauty has used the multi-coloured beading technique which is typical of her region of residence to cover the entire form.

ANIMALS

In the first schedule of workshops in WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2000) a small cohort of rural beaded cloth animal makers joined in with the discussions on HIV/AIDS, and of their own accord, came up with their creative reactions to the information in the meetings. This following section details some of their work.



Title: The Snake

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Animal

Creator: Jabu Mchunu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wire.

Colours: Purple with black

Size: 50cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Jabu this snake is termed *imfezi* which means 'can do anything perfectly'. This snake represents an achiever; it is very fast and very clever. Jabu warns that "if you get bitten (by this snake) it will kill your eyesight immediately, so you must rush to hospital."

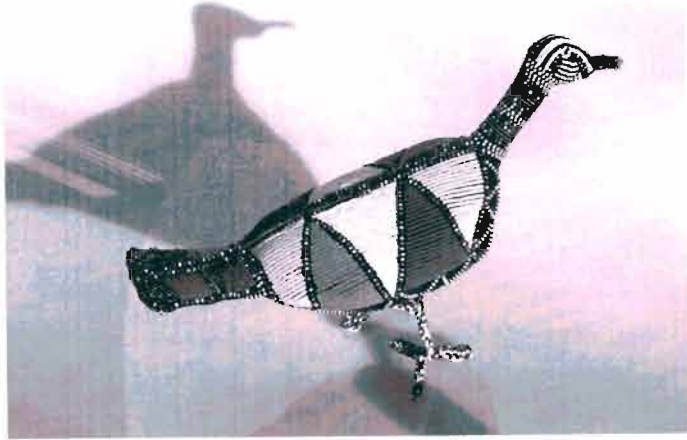
She makes the connection between AIDS and the idiosyncrasies of the snake. In this case her snake comes with a health warning to all.

She has fully beaded the long form and it is strikingly similar to a real snake in shape, form and colour.

Berglund (1976:284)¹ claims that the Zulu believe that all poisonous snakes have "split" tongues and are therefore related to the forked tongue of lightening which is the anger of the sky. "The split tongue is quite clearly a symbol of evil in Zulu society (p.284)."

NOTES

1. For more information on the role of snakes in Zulu belief systems see Berglund's *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* 1976:280-286



Title: Bird

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Animal

Creator: Linah Shelembe

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric and wire

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 20cms x 14cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

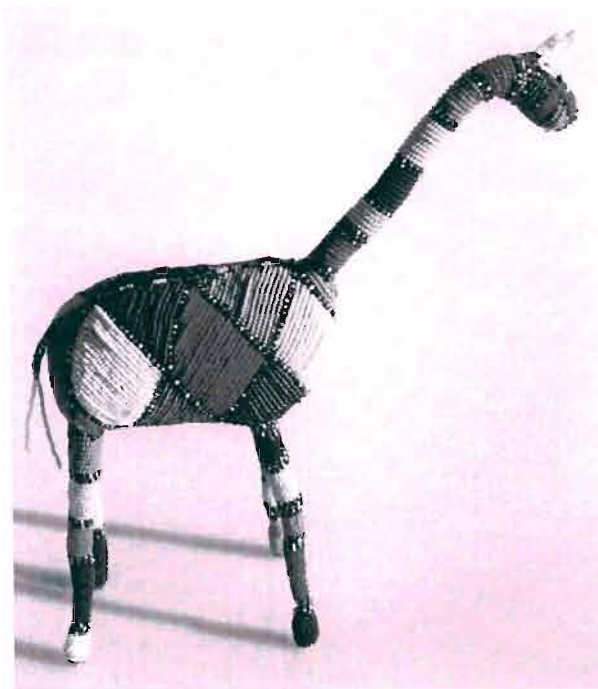
Description/Story: Linah reported that her bird is an *inyoni*. She also claimed that there is an illness called *inyoni* which affects only young children.

According to *isangoma* Agnes Xaba (personal communication June 1 2006) there is indeed a highly recognizable illness called *inyoni*. She claims that *inyoni* only affects small babies who show extreme symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea. Whilst she can readily provide the *muthi* for this ailment, she also claims that you can buy a remedy at the chemist, and it is also called *inyoni*¹.

Linah's bird is plump and proud. Its posture and stance is very realistic. It is beaded in typical regional beadwork colours and designs.

NOTES:

1. According to *isangoma* Agnes Xaba (personal communication June 1 2006) there is a similar illness known as *ithugu*. This describes a centipede or a *songololo* which arches its back as it slithers along the ground. The symptoms for this are only seen in very young babies and are evidenced by loud crying and vomiting with a very painful stomach area. Agnes made the point that her *muthi* would provide emetic relief through “getting the *ithugu* out” of the baby.



Title: Giraffe

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Animal

Creator: Gcinani Mchunu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wire frame

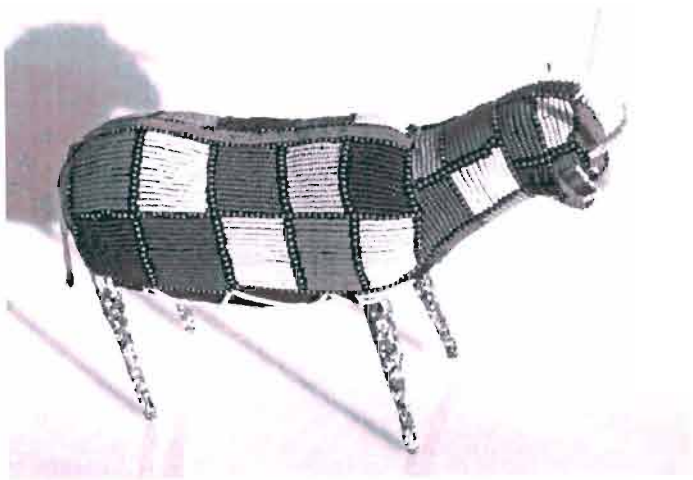
Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 34cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Gcinani explained her giraffe as being “just magical to look at.” The form is completely covered in beadwork and she uses a typical design and colour formation which is regionally specific of all the animal makers from her area of residence.



Title: Beautiful Cow

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Animal

Creator: Jabu Mchunu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Subject: WORKSHOP 1 (1999/2001) Beaded cloth doll and jewellery workshops on HIV/AIDS education

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric and wire frame

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 15cms

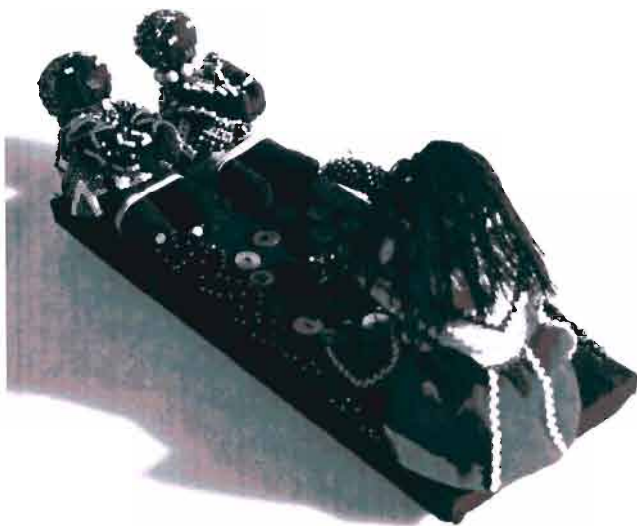
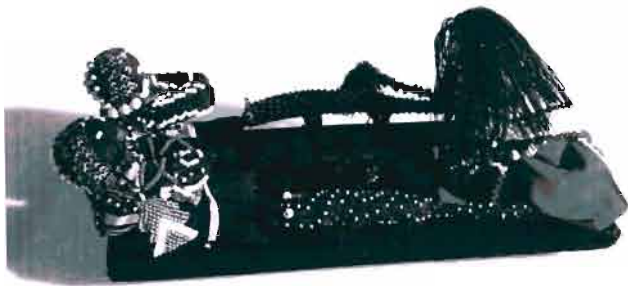
Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Jabu told the story of her cow as such: "I look out of my kraal window everyday and see my beautiful cow. This gives me so much happiness each day." Accordingly this is why she decided to make this cow for the *Siyazama* Project. She wanted to "show us something which gave her pleasure as this cow helps her and her husband dig fields and plant crops. This means that she and her husband can have fresh food."

When looking under the cow there is clear indication of a set of beaded udders. Jabu's cow is fully beaded and she has used the regionally specific and identifiable method of both design and colour which is typical of her area of residence. This method is preferred and used by all the animal makers.

WORKSHOP 2: 2001 Five workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness (magical and supernatural beliefs, remembering the dead, caring for the youth, nutrition).



Title: Umpundulu Bird

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread, buttons, wire, *imphepho*, wooden base

Colours: multi-coloured with red, black and white as dominant colours

Size: 10cms x 24cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Celani Njoyeza's 'Umpundulu Bird' tableau describes a supernatural situation which, according to her, can be likened to the current AIDS pandemic in her rural community. Although the tableau is all about a big dangerous bird with enormous feet and which signifies immediate death, there is no sign of a bird in the tableau construction. The story, collected in 2001, and in Celani's words is thus: "Two children are playing happily in the field and on return home are alarmed to find both their parents missing. They consult with the *izangoma* who, in turn, consults with the ancestors through two lizards, to discover that both of the parents have been kicked by the *umpundulu* bird and are dead. The children are orphans and are being looked after by neighbours in the community."

The tableau consists of three figures: two small children sitting side by side facing the *izangoma*. The children appear to be leaning backwards with hands together and arms outstretched giving the viewer a sense of helplessness. The *izangoma* is actively swinging her switch and consulting with the ancestor's (*amadlozi*) through the burning of the small stack of *imphepho* on the ground. The tableau is flanked either side by two fully beaded lizards which face the children.

Celani, when asked why there was no bird to be seen on the tableau, remarked that this bird named *umpundulu* is invisible and can only be seen by the *izangoma*. Accordingly it is very large and, generally, if seen by the *izangoma* almost always signifies death and destruction. She told me that, with children, when they are "kicked by the *umpundulu*" that they "go green" just before they die. One of my respondents whom I questioned further about this bird made the point of telling me that in Zulu culture if someone dies without warning or very suddenly, it is often claimed to be the work of the *umpundulu*.

As far as the lizards are concerned, Berglund's work (1976:284) relates that any animal which has a forked tongue is considered "a bad animal", and that "the split tongue is quite clearly a symbol of evil in Zulu society." He also

claims that lizards are believed to be vehicles for delivering “messages of death”, and are directly associated with evil. He also likens them to being “the familiars of witches” and is much feared.

In 2005 Celani was asked again to relate the story of her *umpundulu* bird tableau and she told a slightly different story: “The two children grew up without knowing their parents so the two children went to the *izangoma* to *bhula* so that they can find out who their parents are. Everybody in the village tells them that they are not staying with their parents but they do not tell them who their parents are. The *izangoma* tries to find their parents by using the bones but she cannot. While doing this two animals called *izimpundulu* fall from above to pant and to tell the children who their parents are. The two animals tell the children that their parents were taken from their house and were killed.” She continues with “The children in the tableau have their hands together because they are clapping; thanking the *izangoma* for telling them the truth.”



Title: Unsafe Sex B/ Rape and Healer

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread, safety pin

Colours: Black, white, red and blue

Size: 9cms x 25cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Gabi Gabi she does this type of work because it is "all about my life. My husband was a traditional healer and he used to sleep with his patients."

She provided me with a story of this tableau in 2005 after the death of her husband: "I have used an animal print base. This is the second stage when my husband and his mistress were infected with HIV and were sleeping with each other quite often. I have used white beads to symbolize their short-lived happiness. They got married although their marriage could not be registered because the man, my husband, was already married to me and we hadn't divorced. It was a white wedding and everything was going well for them."

Gabi Gabi gave me an earlier version of this tableau in 2002, before the death of her husband, and the story she provided me is thus: "The young virgin

seeks help from the traditional healer *isangoma* for an ailment. The *isangoma* treats the young woman by violently raping her.”

Gabi Gabi has used regionally typical multi-coloured stranded loops to embellish the bodies which are firm and rigid. On the rapist's back is a beaded pin 'umamphapheni' indicating simple stepped pyramid design, which could possibly indicate some historical origin, as this design closely reflects some of the early beadwork styles from Nongoma. The male headgear is made up of blue beads, and the female headgear appears to be joined to the ground.

The velvet animal print base covering gives this tableau an almost 'parlour type' kinky look. The overall effect is one of violence and hostility as the mouths are wide open and screaming at each other. The eyes are large and wide open as if in terror. The two figures are placed precariously to one side of the tableau adding to the already unstable setting. Gabi Gabi has produced a most violent tableau which, if indeed, talks of “short-lived happiness”, gives the viewer the impression that the level of malevolence and misconduct at the hands of a healer (husband) is highly deceitful. Retribution for such a violent and deceitful act, such as an untimely death, seems appropriate to Gabi Gabi.



A



B

Title: Stealing a baby A+B

Craft Genre: Beaded cloth doll

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Fabric, wool, wood, plastic and glass beads

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: A = 6cm x 6cm x 15cm, B= 6cm x 9cm x 12cm

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Celani tells the story of these two interlinking tableaux as such: This story is about a mother who has a baby (A). She is suffering ill-health from being HIV positive. Her baby is sick with a disease called *inyoni* (bird), which is an illness that feels as though something is biting one in the stomach. She took her baby to the *izangoma* (traditional healer) for help, but the healer was only posing as an *izangoma*. The person is actually involved in *ubuthakathi* (witchcraft). The *umthakathi* (witch) stole the baby and fled with it. The concerned mother is still sitting around waiting for her baby to be returned

(B). Unfortunately the witch is going to kill the baby and use the body parts for destructive, generally poisonous *imithi* (medicine). Making *imithi* with body parts is called *ukuthwala* (get rich quickly). This is a very powerful and expensive form of *ubuthakathi*.

Berglund believes that "anger is the root of *abathakathi* and that unless the anger is 'cooled' it inevitably will express itself as *ubuthakathi*. The longer anger remains in people and grows in them, the more devastating the forthcoming eruption" (1989:270).

Celani has used a typical regional style of beadwork on both of these tableaux. The female figures are typically Zulu in style, accessorizing and posture, and Tableau B especially reflects well the notion of patiently sitting and waiting. Celani has captured the essence of Zulu femininity with these two figures and executed the abundant and colourful beadwork with her expert ability.



Title: The Old Lady with Walking Stick

Craft Genre: Beaded cloth doll

Creator: Zanele Shangaze

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, plastic beads, wire, fabric, corrugated cardboard, thread, buttons, wool and wooden base.

Colours: Multi-coloured.

Size: 10cms square; 23cms tall

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: In Zanele's words "The old lady is walking down the road holding a stick. Most people are scared of her as they know her to have special magical powers and for this reason they keep well away from her."

Her beaded cloth tableau is well constructed depicting a recognisable and typical older Zulu female stance with large hips and broad chest. The doll is accessorized with regionally specific beadwork common to the area. She has used multi-coloured beaded strands which are sewn flat onto the figure to

highlight key lines. She appears to be walking very slowly, yet purposely, and is wearing a blue and white beaded AIDS logo.

Zanele gives expression to the commonly held notion in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal that some old woman can have dangerous magical powers, and should be avoided at all costs.



Title: Women crucified to AIDS

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth sculpture

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Medical Magic and HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wooden planks, human hair.

Colours: Blue, turquoise, white and black

Size: 32cms x 20cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Lobolile believes that it is the female population that is being very badly affected by the escalating HIV positive infection rates in her rural community. She has placed female figures on a crucifix to show this dilemma. In her own words Lobolile describes the accompanying story to this sculpture as such "The woman on the cross is worried about HIV, so she is praying to Jesus that the doctors will find the cure for AIDS. She is passing messages to the church as well. They must pray to Jesus to ask that the cure be given to the doctors so that they can heal the people."

The 'hanging' crucifix can be seen as a new and emerging form of beaded cloth sculpture. It can be 'hung' as opposed the standing crucifix forms which are erected onto small wooden bases. The standing crucifixes have been produced by the rural craftswomen earlier on in the project, and there is also some prior evidence of this form of construction in the Jo Thorpe Collection which is housed in the Killie Campbell Museum of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Lobolile has beaded the front section of the form using shades of blue, white and turquoise glass beads. Her beadwork stitch is typical of the Msinga regional style and features strong yet simple geometric design. The female head is adorned with human hair. All of her crucifixes have a large 'J' embroidered onto them. When questioned about the relevance of this 'J' she replied with "it stands for Jesus." Further qualifying this response she offered "it is through Jesus that we pray to our ancestors to help us with this AIDS" and "the cross I made I thought of my sins (and) that Jesus is my only saviour. He's the only one who can save me from my sins." She has used a small fringe of beads *udidla* in a vertical row along the base of the crucifix. This can be seen to be signifying a female.

Lobolile Ximba achieved a degree of recognition with this particular sculpture in 2003 when she won the coveted 'Best Craftsperson in South Africa' Prize at the Brett Kebble Art Awards and with this a large monetary award. Since this award she has reproduced several collections on this theme for galleries in South Africa.



Title: The Twins

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, metal studs, wool, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 35cms x 42cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: The Twin Tableau by Lobolile Ximba is a powerful sculpture which spoke of internalized meaning and magic. In her own words she discusses twins as such: "Twins must be treated equally and once a mother gives birth to twins, a goat must be killed immediately otherwise one of the twins will die. The mother must also be outwardly happy with her twins, as if not, one twin will most certainly die." In her tableau Lobolile describes one of the twins as being afraid of marriage. Naming them '*Nomlingo*' Miss Magic and '*Lingekilo*' (opposite of magic) the married twin, although warned of the risks of marriage by her sister, is HIV positive. As twins they are perceived to

have identical feelings with magical occurrences between them, yet this is not the case with AIDS. Initially in the illness they were experiencing common feelings and closeness but once '*Lingekilo*' disclosed her status, these feelings are no longer happening. They are now separated and can therefore, no longer, be termed 'twins'.

Lobolile has used typical Msinga beadwork on both these figures clearly depicting the difference between the married doll and the unmarried doll.

On delivery of this twin tableau into the *Siyazama* workshop a lengthy discussion ensued with 'twins' as the topic of focus. The following statements were gathered from the rural woman in the evaluation study.

Tholiwe claims that twins are "extra trouble to take care of and are expensive." Beauty claimed that "Raising two kids at the same time is difficult. Sometimes they can look alike and act so different. If one of them is ill you must take both to the doctor because the other one will also fall ill. If you punish one of them, the other one will also feel the pain."

Lobolile claimed "I like them when I see them though I would not like to have them for myself. They would be too much trouble. I know that they are short-tempered. When one is sick the other gets sick. Also when one dies he/she is not buried at the graveyard but only at the family home." Buzani offered information from her own family experience "In my family it was not a good experience because when they were born, the mother and one twin died. After a short while the father died. So to the family it was not a pleasant experience. Though we did take care of the other one. He is now 16 years old. They say that twins bring poverty to the whole family. Another thing is that they bring death upon the parents. Usually the birth of twins is not joyful."

Gabi Gabi claimed "it is just beliefs and superstitions that if a mother gives birth to twins one of the twins must be killed or else their mother will die. With my brother one of his cows gave birth to twin calves and they both died. When

his wife gave birth she also had twins. Both her children lived for a short while but later her son died. The girl survived.”

Bonangani reported that, in her opinion, “Twins are special because they were born on the same day and the mothers have to buy two of everything. They are normal people.” Celani agreed with Bonangani but added “They are children like everyone else. In my family, when twins were born, one died and so did the mother.” Nonetheless she told us “if one twin is naughty you must smack them both.” Zandile offers “In my family we have several sets of twins. Firstly, the twin that came out first is the younger one, and the second one is the eldest. It is believed that during fertility, the one who comes out second was fertilized first.”

According to Princess Ndlovu, “All I know is that when they have grown up (13 years old or so) one has to slaughter a goat to thank the ancestors as well as to ask for their safety.”

Fokosile had much to offer on the significance and treatment of twins and her comments were as such: “Sometimes you get a boy and a girl, and sometimes its one gender. This is very interesting. When you do ancestral functions for them you must use two goats, and not one. Although they are like one person, sharing everything, to the ancestors it’s two people. If you slaughter one goat, then one twin will definitely die. The ancestors claim the other twin. So, in whatever you do, acknowledge them as two different people.” She continued with: “When they go to sleep they are supposed to wake at the same time. In fact this happens automatically because they will get hungry at the same time. Everything about them compliments each other.”

Fikile responded with: “Superstitions say that when you give birth to twins one of them has to get married young but personally I don’t believe that.”

Berglunds (1976:34) account for a mythical explanation of twins is referenced in the powerful relationship, as perceived by the Zulu, between the sky and the earth as in husband and wife respectively. “We call them twins because

we do not know which one is more important. If we say twins then we do not say that one is greater than the other. But they are different. It is like humans. The one is this way. The other is another way. But, they have their similarities."



Title: Lady Giving Birth

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2001

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, plastic beads, fabric, wire, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 24cms x 16cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Celani the story goes as such: "The midwife is attending the childbirth as the mother is HIV positive. She needs extra help as she is very weak after a long and painful labour." This poignant tableau talks of the issues which surround attempts to ensure safe birthing conditions in remote rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal. Celani has used fabric scraps and beadwork to recreate the very realistic birth scene.



Title: *Izangoma* in Training

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 2 (2001) Workshops on Medical Magic and Traditional Healing with HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, fabrics, metal studs, wooden dowels, goats skin, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 25cms x 20cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Beauty the story of this tableau is as follows: "The four young novice's *itwaza* are undergoing intensive training. One *itwaza* falls down from exhaustion as she has no strength due to being HIV positive. Her future as an *isangoma* is threatened."

Beauty claims that this is a worrying consequence for the young *itwaza* as once one is 'called' to become an *isangoma* one must follow this calling. If not followed there is acute danger of impending debilitating illness and, in most cases, death.

This tableau acutely displays the sadness which surrounds this situation. Beauty has used the regional accessorizing with elements of beadwork and skin and each of the *itwaza* is dressed appropriately and according to their status as novices in traditional healing.

Workshop 3: 2002 Five workshops in First AID for AIDS (Practical First AID for AIDS patients)



Title: Sexual Harassment

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002/3) First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, cotton and velvet fabric, safety pins, razor blade, thread, wooden base

Colours: multi-coloured with red, black and white dominant colours.

Size: 30cms x 12 cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Gabi Gabi tells the story of this tableau as such: "The young pregnant woman seeks help from the HIV positive *izangoma* for an STD problem. The *izangoma* treats her by having unprotected sex with her."

The two figures are fully beaded and poised to face each other on a crimson coloured velvet base. The very pregnant female leans forward as if stumbling

and falling, as the *izangoma*, blade in hand, throws his head back to reveal a large gaping screaming mouth. His mouth has a ring of white beads circumventing it and outlining the extent of its size. Numerous AIDS red ribbon logos are strewn all over the base as if in warning.

Once again, Gabi Gabi based on her life as the widow of a traditional healer, has warned of the malpractice of some traditional healers in the province. She warns that it is “not only her husband” who is guilty of this form of treatment.



Title: *Izintandane* AIDS orphans / girl and boy

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth dolls

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread, wool, animal skin, human hair

Colours: Black, red, white, blue and yellow.

Size: 7cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: These child figure dolls are representative of the growing numbers of HIV/AIDS infected and affected orphans in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. These child figures reflect the concern which the *Siyazama* Project craftswomen have with this looming problem as they often complained about the growing communities of children which they are propelled to assist and feed each day. This bit into their already meager income from the sale of their crafts.

The *Siyazama* Project began producing very small dolls at the time of the 13th International AIDS Conference which was held in Durban in 2000. The hope

was that the legion of international delegates would each purchase one. The point to note here is these dolls were small versions of the larger traditional dolls and were not necessarily child figures.

The orphan child figure dolls are made from tightly bound layers of cloth, often dampened, which are rolled together to form the body. The head is made separately making use of a bundle of cotton wool or fabric scraps, covered tightly in fabric and sewn onto the top of the body shape. The flat base of the figure is created by taking a long kitchen knife, skillfully balancing the coil of fabric on the thigh, and cutting through to create a squared-off base. The shape is then beaded circumventing it with strands of glass beads and taking into account the inclusion of the geometric AIDS logo. The boy *udoli* has a loin covering used by males called an *umutsha*, or *isinene*, and the girl *udoli* is completed by the addition of a short fringe at the base called *udidla* made of wool. Her hair is dressed up in the simple *umyeko* style. Both the girl and boy *udoli*, by their outward dress (the significance of the *umutsha* and the *umyeko* hair style) could signify that the 'coming of age' ritual is almost upon them both.



Title: AIDS orphans

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll/tableau

Creator: Bonangani Ximba

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, upholstery studs, wooden base, human hair

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 40cms x 8cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: For the first time seven AIDS orphans appear in one tableau in the *Siyazama* Project. In Bonangani's words this tableau depicts the growing numbers of AIDS orphans in her community. Bonangani describes the situation as "very bad, but the community grandmothers and

mothers are caring for these children as best they can with their limited income.”

“Around my area and in other places I have observed that there are many orphans because of this disease. My story is to make people aware of the dangers of AIDS; one of them being that a lot of children are parentless. They are left alone because of this disease.”

The beaded inscription reads *izintandane ngenxaya HIV* which means ‘orphaned because of AIDS’. Each beaded cloth doll is different from the next and Bonangani has used human hair to adorn three of the heads. She reported that she gets the human hair from a friend who is a hairdresser in her community. Some of the dolls have an AIDS logo embedded into the beadwork and others have it as an additional hanging square of beadwork fabric. The red AIDS beaded logos are arranged in a linear format on the base.

The use of human hair was interrogated and Bonangani was asked where it came from. To this she replied that several of her friends were hairdressers and that she received it from them. Berglund (1976:291) in his research discusses the issue of human hair and nail clippings, known as *impilo*, which describes both health and life. He claims that they are symbols of growth as when a man dies his nails and hair “cease to grow.”



Title: AIDS Angel

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Bonangani Ximba

Area of residence: Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, corrugated cardboard, wire, netting, wooden base

Colours: Mainly white and black with highlights of blue and grey

Size: 37cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Bonangani's angel doll originated out of the First AID for AIDS workshops. These were important workshops as they were the very first in which a definitive form and colour intervention took place in the processes of the *Siyazama* project. I fully acknowledged that if this project was to work economically that it was important to introduce variations and adaptations in an attempt to continue to enthrall the buyers of these dolls. With this and Christmas decorations in mind, a new design direction was sought. To this end the discussion ranged around the role of angels in Zulu cosmology. I

subsequently purchased only white, silver, cream and clear coloured beads, fabric and wool. This was purposely done to invite the rural women to experiment with working in a monochromatic style. They readily adapted and the range of variations in their creative forms was vast and extensive.

Bonangani, in her first angel doll, used a variation of colours of which white and cream formed the dominant colours. She added both grey and blue beads in small quantities and used these in specific areas to add highlights and detail. Nonetheless the doll conforms to traditional Msinga dress. Her skirt is of the traditional pleated style called *isidwaba* which is normally made from leather hide. This shows us that she is a married woman. In the case of this doll construction Bonangani has utilized corrugated cardboard to replica the *isidwaba*. This has been the practice for several years since Jo Thorpe of the African Art Centre, according to my informants, “banned” the use of any leather on the dolls. All too often the incorrect curing processes of the hide led to premature decaying of the doll. Her waistband *ixhama* circumvents her middle with her apron *isigege* hanging centrally on the form.

Bonangani has included two large angel wings which protrude and visibly stand either side of the angel doll.

When questioned on whether these angel dolls were alive or dead, Bonangani responded in unison with the other doll makers, that these angel dolls were indeed dead. Yet they had an important role to play in the current AIDS pandemic and that was to “warn people about behaviour.”



Title: AIDS Angel

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS
HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wire, metal studs and wooden base

Colours: White and cream with black

Size: 36cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Tholiwe describes her angel "as the one that tells people about good behaviour." Her doll is shown as being married as this is depicted by the wide *isicholo* which is studded and positioned on her head. Her neck is adorned with the *isiyaya* necklace.



Title: The Coffin Story

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, cardboard, wooden base

Colours: Mutli-coloured

Size: 19cms x 13cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Celani the story is thus: "Every year the family awaits the annual arrival home of their father and husband. He works on the mines in Johannesburg. Every year he comes home in December and always has extra cash which means that the family can buy meat and celebrate his homecoming. The mother has heard people talking saying that her husband is ill because of AIDS and he does not want to come home. But this year he came home in a coffin. He had died of AIDS. The family is extremely worried about what will become of them and the mother is concerned that she, too, may be HIV positive."

This story has long term implications for the family and its economic survival. Celani has recreated this simple scene with much imagination. She has used the beadwork style typical of her region of origin (Valley of a Thousand Hills region) and the 'daisy chain' design bears testimony to this.



Title: Snake Story

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, feathers, buttons, *imphepho*, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 30cms x 21cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Celani "The family is concerned as their daughter is suddenly being followed by a snake wherever she goes. They consult the *isangoma* who seeks advice from the *amadlosi* ancestors. They are told that the young girl will always have the snake as company and that the family must try to become used to it."

Celani had, earlier in 2002, provided a slightly different story of this tableau. She reported that "The stories that I tell are always true. This tableau is about a young lady who is training to become an *isangoma*. She needs to get a snake from the water to her house but the snake won't come. Her parents go down to the river to beg the snake."



Title: Enema Story

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Workshops in First AID for AIDS

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 19cms x 12cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Beauty in her community “Mothers believe that if you give your daughters enema’s on a regular basis that they will be spared from becoming HIV infected.”

The enema has a laxative effect and is seen to cleanse the stomach of all poison. Berglund’s work (1976:328) explains that the Zulu believe that to dispel fluid is tantamount to “expelling evil” and that emetics are used prolifically as a symbol of purification. He uses the Zulu idiom “*ukuhlansa*” to describe the results of using an emetic. “All bodily excess, particularly faeces, which is vile, must be disposed of outside the homestead and preferably be buried.”



Title: Animal tower

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 3 (2002) Five workshops in First AID for AIDS
Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wire forms, wooden base

Size: 35cms x 35cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Beauty was inspired by the theme of the 2003 FNB Vita Craft Awards topic 'Animals and other weird things' and with this in mind created her Animal Tower. According to Beauty her Animal Tower is all about "being aware" and "accepting of the AIDS situation" in KwaZulu-Natal. Nonetheless Beauty provided us with two slightly different stories; the first was gathered in 2003 on the delivery of this tableau and the last was gathered in 2005 at the final evaluation study.

Her initial story: She has made a strong statement about the manifestation of the AIDS condition with her range of beading patterns depicted on each of the animals. Purposely beading each animal differently, she has attempted to convey the range of identifiable skin conditions which may befall an AIDS

patient. She has represented these with designs containing colourful dots and stripes.

Based on the form and design of her Human Tower she stacked animals on top of each other to create a tower formation. Each animal has been accessorized differently as this, she claims, is her way of reproducing the opportunistic diseases which are part of the AIDS patients condition. She claims that these are “mirrors” to “help the sick” as they mimic visible skin conditions such as Kaposi’s sarcoma, thrush, scabies and a range of skin rashes. In other words, she claims that the animals are assisting the sufferers by “taking on their sickness formations” and so that the sick might, indeed not, “feel alone” in their misery.

According to Beauty the woman, who standing to the side of the tableau, is HIV positive. She is being “assisted by the animals to deal with her skin conditions” as they each begin to take on the skin imperfections. Beauty claims that this is greatly assisting the woman to deal with her illness.

Her second story is thus: “This woman is looking after the animals and when the owner comes to see how the animals are doing he finds that they have sores on their bodies. He gives the woman some ointment to rub onto the animals only to find that the woman has sores on her hands because she is infected with AIDS. Now she is infecting the animals.”

Beauty’s animal tower is one of the most unusual artifacts to come out of the *Siyazama* Project. Her superb beadworking skill and her creative ability has led to this transformatory piece.

It was presented to FNB Vita Craft Panel in 2003 as an award submission and upon its success it was sold almost immediately. Beauty has not, to my knowledge, produced another.

Workshops 4 and 5: 2003/4 *Siyazama* Project on exhibition at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture at Middlesex University, London, UK; Six workshops on Anti-retroviral Therapies (ARTs) with trainers from Ithembalabantu Clinic in Umlazi, Durban



Title: Baby Girl on Cross

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth sculpture

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 5 (2003/4) Workshops on Anti-retroviral Therapies (ARTs) and HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, wooden strips, cloth, wool.

Colours: turquoise, black, blue and white

Size: 15cms x 10cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Tholiwe the story behind this crucifix is "The baby girl died of AIDS and this is a warning to others to become aware. AIDS kills." Tholiwe also believes that "we should not discriminate against those people who have AIDS. We should love them and become friends with them because you don't know whether you've got the virus or not until you are tested."

Tholiwe has created this poignant small hanging crucifix as a 'warning' to others. At the time of her construction the *Siyazama* project was undergoing antiretroviral therapy informational instruction undertaken by the Ithembalanbantu Clinic personnel from Inanda. This gave the craftswomen the opportunity to question and to find the answers to the long list of queries which they had with regard the treatment of the AIDS condition and the long-awaited South African governmental roll-out promises.

Tholiwe has included the pill shape into her AIDS logo and this she claims is to "remind people that once they are on ARTs, to keep taking them regularly, like the doctor told them." Her sculpture has a number of different but powerful messages embedded within it. She has incorporated, most specifically, the regional style of the Msinga beadwork design forms and updated this with modern beadwork stitches. This design could well be seen on the *ixhama* or waistband. The short beaded strands on the arms of the figure are typical of her signature style and she periodically uses this look, both in the past and currently, when covering doll figures. She has fringed the base with an *udidla*. It is highly idiosyncratic and identifiable as her style of beadwork.



Title: Child figure and the pills

Craft Genre: Beaded cloth sculpture

Creator: Khishwepi Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 5 (2003/4) Workshops on Anti-retroviral Therapies (ARTs) and HIV/AIDS awareness

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, human hair, wooden base

Colours: Green and white

Size: 13cms x 9cms

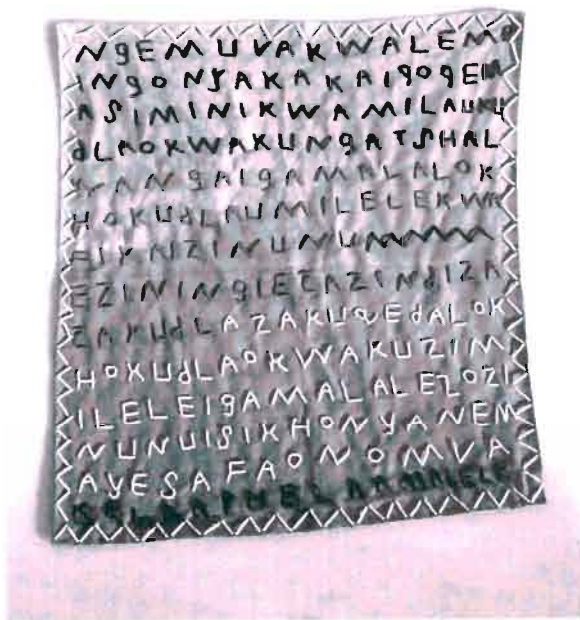
Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Khishwepi is making a point about the pills (ARTs) that have arrived in South Africa. She is using this crucifix as an example of how one must remember to take the pills with great regularity; otherwise it could mean grave illness and death.

She has included the shape of the pills into her beadwork “as a reminder” to people of the treatment which is available. Her geometric layout in this small sculpture shows resilience and determination. It also shows a keen mathematical ability. The short strips of beadwork on the arms of the figure

are testament to her region of residence as well as her forebears. This is her mother's idiosyncratic style of beadwork which she has incorporated here.



Title: *Isikhonyane* The Locust Plague

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth

Creator: Fokosile Ngema

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2003

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 5 (2003/4) Workshops on Anti-retroviral Therapies (ARTs)

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread

Colours: Green, black, white

Size: 35cms x 40cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: In this small beaded cloth Fokosile makes no reference directly to AIDS but rather focuses on the locust or rinderpest plague *isikhonyane* which she recalls had a devastating impact on rural lives in early 1900. She claims "It was a bad time. The gardens were emptied; there was no food left in the whole of South Africa." Further claiming that "nothing was left" brings to mind the current situation in a time of AIDS. She has used only text in this cloth and according to her, the reason for this is that it is her ambition "to wear glasses and be able to write like Kate."

Workshop 6: 2003/4 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Siyazama* Project hosts design workshops for scaling up production purposes



Title: Human Tower

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Beauty Ndlovu

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2002

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 6 (2003/4) World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Siyazama* Project hosts design developmental workshops

Materials: Glass beads, thread, wooden dowels, wire, wooden base

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 36cms x 36cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Beauty tells the story as thus "The young wife, positioned at the top of the human tower, has just learnt that her husband is HIV positive. On hearing this she ran back to her community, who as her sisters, her aunts and her mothers, protected her by pushing her up to the top of the human

tower – out of the reach of her husband. Although this has helped initially, it is of no help to her for the future as her husband is coming looking for her. He has paid his *lobola* and wants his wife back.” Beauty feels that the one of the greatest fears for married women is infidelity and deceit on behalf of their partners. She poses a question which encapsulates this tableau “How long can they keep her up there?”

Beauty has created a most unusual tableau in a four tier tower formation. To one side there are three small fully beaded animals and, according to Beauty, they are goats, and their role is to protect the encircled tower formation. Each figure has arms interlinked with the next, as this forms a strong layer to support another circle of figures above. Each figure, clad in traditional shawls and aprons, is carefully and meticulously beaded and accessorized with hair braids, skirts and necklaces. This style of beadwork employed in this tableau is intrinsically talking of the Valley of a Thousand Hills regions of KwaZulu-Natal, and this is seen through the beadwork stitch and the choice of bead colours.

Beauty got her inspiration for this Human Tower from paging through a book on Ardmore Ceramics in my office one day. She has made this tower in several variations. Her Animal Tower won her an FNB Vita Craft award in 2003.

Workshop 7: 2004 Five HIV/AIDS Reflective workshops and development of new collection for Michigan State University Museum Collection



Title: Betrothed Angel

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2005

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 7 (2004) HIV/AIDS Reflective workshops and Development of new collection for Michigan State University Museum Collection

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, netting, wire, upholstery studs, wooden base

Colours: Mainly white and black with highlights of other colours

Size: 36cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Tholiwe this *ingoloz*i (betrothed angel doll) is "bringing messages from God about how to behave" in a climate of HIV/AIDS.

Tholiwe's angel doll's dress is highly distinctive of her status both in the family and community, as well as an indicator of her age. Her coiled hair style is termed *nqothela* (personal communication Lobolile Ximba May 2006) and is a typical Msinga headdress. This style shows the community that the female has a committed relationship with a boyfriend. She could be described as being betrothed or "ready to get married." Once the *lobola* (brideprice) has been paid she will wear the *izicholo* which is a wide brimmed red headdress worn only by married women.

The dolls beaded necklace of long vertical strands was commonly worn by the elder females in the Msinga region and this look was revived in the *Siyazama* project workshops. In the literature there is no indication of this style of necklace construction. According to Tholiwe the term to describe this necklace is *isiyaya*. Her *imfacane* (waistband) is typical of the traditional look which would often encompass studs. This waistband was typically worn by unmarried women.

Her *ibhayi* (straight skirt) implies that she is single and "in waiting for marriage."

Workshop 8: 2004 Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection



Title: Rape at the Hands of a Healer

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004) Rape and HIV/AIDS awareness.

Tableau in Museum of World Culture Collection in Gothenburg, Sweden

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, thread, razor blade, wooden base

Colours: Pink

Size: 25cms x 25cms square

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Gabi Gabi tells the story of this all pink tableau as such:

"The young girl goes to the *isangoma* as she has a sexually transmitted disease STD which needs treatment. The *isangoma* with blade in hand and erect penis leans towards her pretending to help her, but instead he rapes her."

This square tableau is completely dressed up in only pink beads and fabric. Gabi Gabi has used an unusual square format for this tableau and the geometry of her beadwork adds a new dimension. This accessorizing provides a seductive ambiance which belies the violence of the activity. Both male and female have enlarged mouths and are clearly screaming out. The *izangoma* looms threateningly over the patient, who cowers subserviently. A small fully beaded chicken sits to one side on the ground, in payment for the treatment.

It is beautifully constructed and artfully accessorized yet it is a most disturbing tableau which talks of her recent life experiences which have included spousal infidelity, deceit and malpractice.

This artwork is in the permanent collection at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden.



Title: Man on the Cross

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth sculpture

Creator: Khishwepi Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Workshop/Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, human hair, wooden base.

This crucifix is in Museum of World Culture Collection in Gothenburg, Sweden

Colours: lime green, dark green, blue and white.

Size: 35cms x 20cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Khishwepi tells the story of this sculpture as thus: "The man on the cross has AIDS but he is not showing any signs yet. His woman partner knows that he has AIDS because he has slept with her and she has AIDS. The man is lying. Her only hope now is to pray to Jesus." She made it clear in the interview that this is a true story.

Khishwepi has used a modern bead design style which can be seen as new and original in the context of the *Siyazama* project. It is simple and bold; this layout and style of design not been seen before in the history of the project. Yet this style and design has its roots in the past as it is reminiscent of the *ulimi* (men's necklaces) which attached to a cord or beaded strip were worn hanging down the back.



Title: Young Man on the Cross

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth sculpture

Creator: Lobolile Ximba

Area of residence: KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection. This crucifix is in the Museum of World Culture Collection in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wooden base

Colours: Green, black and white.

Size: 30cms x 19cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Lobolile describes her crucifix as a 'true story' and explains it as such: "The young man on the cross was told at the hospital that he was HIV positive. He denied it and carried on behaving badly by sleeping with other women, but now he is undeniably sick. A large woman is his lover; she now also has AIDS and has told the community that he infected her. Men generally lie a lot and now this man has been exposed."

She has used typical Msinga complicated beadwork design as a panel to add detail to the standing crucifix. According to Jolles (1994:48) this is most possibly a necklace *ugcemeshe* which has been creatively used for the purpose at hand. The 'J' for Jesus at the head of the crucifix is also typically evident as this appears to be traditional practice in the *Siyazama* Project style. Her message of male infidelity appears as a warning to others.

Significantly, she has used the *ulimi* (men's necklace) to create her message.



Title: Jesus Cross

Craft Genre: Beaded cloth sculpture

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric and wooden slats

Colours: Pale grey and pale blue

Size: 25cms x 16cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Tholiwe produced this hanging crucifix as "a message of love to all AIDS patients." Her aim is that it should hang "behind every AIDS hospital and AIDS hospice bed in South Africa."

She has used two very pale bead colours both of the shiny glass bead finish. This ethereal work is poignant in its simplicity and depicts a sense of caring and humility. Although outwardly appearing very modern, this design has its origin in the early Msinga beadwork style. Once again, the *udidla* (fringe) is added to complete the sculpture.



Title: Shembe *Makoti*

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Khishwepi Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2005

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wire

Colours: Multi-coloured

Size: 33cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Khishwepi is herself a Shembe follower and depicts this doll as a Shembe *makoti* who proudly shows off her beliefs through her distinctive beadwork. The Shembe beadwork is idiosyncratically identifiable by both its design and colour, and generally makes use of close hues of bead colours not usually seen in everyday beadwork from the region. Making use of mostly shiny and glossy glass beads, the colours can include purples, greens, pinks and blues with tones of grey. The designs can include circles, ovals and asymmetrical scatter designs, also not seen in everyday beadwork design.

Yet the region of origin of this doll is clearly the Msinga area and this is seen by the distinctive dress on the figure.

She wears an *isidwaba* skirt which indicates marriage, as does her *isicholo* headgear which is shown in the Shembe form. According to Khishwepi the term used for the scalloped beadwork girdle or fringe is *umshwepe*. This is a fairly typical beadwork pattern and is used and worn prolifically in everyday celebrations and rituals in all areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Around her neck is the *isiyaya* necklace.



Title: Green Makoti

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Doll

Creator: Tholiwe Sitole

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Glass beads, thread, metal studs, wool, wire, wooden base

Colours: Green

Size: 37cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: This doll originated out of a range of design interventions which experimented with monochromatic single colour tonal variations for the dolls. Four major colours schemes were introduced and these were pink, blue, yellow and green. The process employed was one in which the fabrics and beads were presented to the rural women and they were left to work on their new creations on their own back in their rural homesteads.

It proved to be an interesting experiment in colour and mostly all claimed to enjoy it very much. Whist showing the vast potential for further

experimentation it showed how the women readily respond to new challenges which they each, in turn, answered in their own idiosyncratic creative manner.



Title: Couple in Bed

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Gabi Gabi Nzama

Area of residence: Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection. Tableau in Museum of World Culture Collection in Gothenburg, Sweden

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, wool, wooden base

Colours: Blue and maroon

Size: 27cms x 18cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: According to Gabi Gabi Nzama the story of this tableau is: "The married couple is in bed having sex. The man has not told his wife that he is HIV positive but is pretending that everything is normal."

Gabi Gabi has created an explicitly sexual tableau, in which she has used only shades of blue beads and fabric contrasted with open and closed diamonds of maroon beadwork. The notion of normality is vivid as the bed décor resembles the sort of linen most might proudly wish to own. She has shaped the sexual genitalia of both the male and the female using fabric and beadwork. Her use of the mix of blue beads in linear stands across the

headboard of the bed gives credence to the regional beadwork style of her home area in Ndwedwe.

This tableau is rich in symbolism and meaning and once again, displays her expert fine attention to detail in her artwork. Her preoccupation with sexual deceit and the threat of becoming HIV infected is a predominant and recurring theme in her work, as this is an aspect of her life which needs to be spoken about.

This artwork is in the permanent collection at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden.



Title: Two very large *makoti* dolls

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Dolls

Creator: Lobolile Ximba, Bonagani Ximba, Fokosile Ngema, Sbongile Ngema

Area of residence: Muden, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2004

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Glass beads, thread, fabric, metal studs, wool, takkies *isicathula*

Size: Each doll 1.9m in height

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Two very large *Makoti* dolls were commissioned by the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg for the 'No Name Fever: AIDS in the Age of Globalization' exhibition which was on show from December 2004 to July 2006. Apart from these large dolls around thirty other *Siyazama* Project beaded cloth dolls and tableaus were commissioned and together they formed a powerful collection of crafts from KwaZulu-Natal alongside artifacts from all corners of the world. All of the work at this international exhibition 'spoke' of AIDS and its impact on humanity, primarily as seen through the eyes of craftspeople, artists, designers, and children throughout the world.

To accomplish the construction of these large dolls two mother and daughter teams were assembled. They were Lobolile and her daughter Bonangani, and Fokosile and her daughter Sbongile. The project took almost six weeks to complete and went through various stages of construction. Beginning with the building of the inner framework of the form, to the binding and winding of successive layers of fabric to form the female body shape, and then finally, the overall accessorizing in terms of the beadwork, headgear and footgear.

The dolls are regionally typical of the Msinga style and both represent married *makoti* women; the status which most in the project desire but also recognize the problems attached with this in the current AIDS pandemic.



Title: Sarah's *imbenge*

Craft Genre: Telephone Wire Weaving *Imbenge*

Creator: Sarah Fikile Ndlovu

Area of residence: Siyanda, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2000

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Telephone wire, galvanized wire

Colours: Red, silver, grey, black

Size: Diameter 31 cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Sarah advocates 'knowing your HIV status' and three months exclusive breastfeeding in her written comment of her telephone *imbenge* which follows: "It has been a good pleasure to know you my beautiful mothers. I would like to introduce myself to you. I am Sarah Ndlovu living at Siyanda A next to Newland East. I am HIV positive for two years. Unfortunately I get pregnant. I went to the clinic to disclose my status to the clinic nurses and they helped me. Nurses gave me pills to drink during my pregnancy period ...that pills prevent child from disease. After 7 months they gave me Neviraprine up until I gave birth. God bless me with a baby girl. Her

name is little Kate. She's negative and healthy etc. She is breast feeding. At the age of 3 months I stop breastfeeding and (am now) collecting milk from my clinic every month. So the important thing to do is to pass this message to the pregnant women living with HIV and AIDS that love life is important. You must not terminate your pregnancy because of HIV/AIDS. You must be proud of being HIV/AIDS. NO alcohol, drugs allowed. Do exercising, eat nutrition food. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Stop terminating pregnancy because of HIV positive. Pregnancy women must take blood test. Stop sex without condom. We must be proud of ourselves"

By depicting males, females and houses into her circular design she has attempted to transmit her messages.



Title: Rape of Children

Craft Genre: Beaded Cloth Tableau

Creator: Celani Njoyeza

Area of residence: Nuyaswa, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 2005

Workshop/Subject: WORKSHOP 8 (2004/5) Rape and HIV/AIDS Awareness workshops and development of the Sweden collection

Materials: Glass beads, fabric, wooden dowels, wooden base

Colours: Primarily blue

Size: 26cms x 26cms

Photographer: Cindy Mothilal

Language: English/Zulu

Description/Story: Celani is very concerned about the dangerous and prevalent practice of child rape in South Africa. She claims that there are people who believe that if they have sex with a child that it will cure them of AIDS. In her rural area this is much concern on behalf of all mothers who need to constantly guard and warn their children against this type of molestation.

Celani has used mainly tones and shades of bring blue to get her point across. She has embellished the figures of the children with shiny colourful beadwork.

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